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# A Heart Garden

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# A Heart Garden

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**New York**

# A Heart Garden

BY

J. R. MILLER

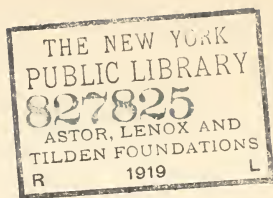
AUTHOR OF

"SILENT TIMES," "MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE,"  
"UPPER CURRENTS," ETC.

*"O God, that I might spend my life for others,  
With no ends of my own,  
That I might pour myself into my brothers,  
And live for them alone."*

New York

THOMAS Y. CROWELL & CO.  
PUBLISHERS



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## PREFACE

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*IT is gratifying to the author that this "Silent Times" Series of books, which has been running now for twenty years, is still in such favor on both sides of the sea. Fully a million and a half of these and the author's other books and booklets have been scattered over the world. This new volume is sent out in the hope that, like the others, it may carry cheer, comfort, and help to many good people here and there.*

J. R. M.

*Philadelphia, U. S. A.*

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## TITLES OF CHAPTERS

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I. A HEART GARDEN	<i>Page</i> 3
II. THE AWAKING OF LIFE'S GLORY	15
III. THE SERVANT OF THE LORD	29
IV. CHRIST'S CALL FOR THE BEST	43
V. WHAT CHRIST EXPECTS OF US	61
VI. THE LESSON OF PERFECTION	77
VII. FOLLOWING OUR VISIONS	91
VIII. THE ONE THING TO DO	107
IX. AS LIVING STONES	121
X. THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD	137
XI. WITNESSES FOR CHRIST	153
XII. GUARDED FROM STUMBLING	169
XIII. THE BIBLE IN LIFE	185
XIV. THE MAKING OF A HOME	197
XV. GUARDING OUR TRUST	213
XVI. THE LESSON OF REST	227
XVII. THE MESSAGE OF COMFORT	241
XVIII. ON BEING A PEACEMAKER	257
XIX. THE OTHER MAN	269
XX. MAKING OUR REPORT	283

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# A Heart Garden

*In my autumn garden I was fain  
To mourn among my scattered roses:  
Alas for that rosebud which uncloses  
To autumn's languid sun and rain  
When all the world is on the wane!  
Which has not felt the sweet constraint of June,  
Nor heard the nightingale in tune.*

*Broad-faced asters by my garden walk,  
You are but coarse compared with roses:  
More choice, more dear that rosebud which uncloses  
Faint-scented, pinched upon its stalk,  
That least and last which cold winds balk;  
A rose it is though least and last of all,  
A rose to me though at the fall.*

—CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

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## CHAPTER FIRST

### A Heart Garden

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WRITER tells of an old woman who said: "My heart is a little garden, and God is planting flowers there." Every heart should be a little garden.

We should keep it always clear of weeds and full of sweet and beautiful plants and flowers. A garden spot anywhere is not only a thing of beauty but is also a blessing to all who see it. Even a window-box filled with its bright color is a benediction. God means that we shall make our lives so beautiful that they will redeem one spot of the world from dreariness and transform it into loveliness.

The picture of a garden runs through all the Bible. The first home of the human race was a garden. Jesus was buried in a garden. When He arose the first Easter morning spring flowers were blooming all about His

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## A Heart Garden

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grave, filling the air with fragrance. There is a legend, too, that as He walked away from the open tomb lilies sprang up in the path on which His feet walked. It is true, at least, that wherever His feet have walked all these centuries, flowers of joy, of hope, of peace, of life, of love have grown. He is changing the wilderness into a garden of roses.

The life of each one is a little garden which he is to dress and keep. In an ancient Bible song the story of such a garden is told. It is not some other one's garden we are to keep, but our own. Some of us find it easier to look after the gardens of our neighbors than our own little patch. But that is not our duty.

*"How fared thy garden-plot, dear heart,  
While thou sat'st on the judgment-seat?  
Who watered thy roses and trained thy vines,  
And kept them from careless feet?"*

*"Nay, that is saddest of all to me,—  
That is saddest of all.  
My vines are trailing, my roses are parched,  
My lilies droop and fall."*

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## A Heart Garden

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*"Go back to thy garden-plot, dear heart;  
Go back till the evening falls,  
And bind thy lilies and train thy vines,  
Till for thee the Master calls.*

*"Go make thy garden fair as thou canst;  
Thou workest never alone;  
Perchance he whose plot is next to thine  
Will see it, and mend his own."*

The ancient song further represents this garden as not at its best. Then there is a prayer to the winds that they may come with their awakening breath, to blow upon it, to call out its beauty and sweetness. Without overspiritualizing, this prayer may be taken to suggest what is needed in very many lives.

*"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;  
Blow upon my garden that the spices thereof  
may flow out."*

The suggestion is that the trees, plants, and flowers in the garden are still lying in the clasp of winter. We know how it is just before spring comes. The trees are bare, but there are thousands of buds only waiting for

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## A Heart Garden

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the breath of the warm sunshine to make them burst into living blossom. The rose bushes are bare and briery and without beauty, but it needs only spring's genial air and gentle rains to clothe them in marvellous loveliness. The fields are dreary and without life, but there are millions of green roots waiting only for the wooing of spring skies to make them rush up into greenness and verdure.

It is such a picture as this that is suggested in the prayer to the winds: "Awake, ye winds, and blow upon this wintry scene, to call out the beauty, the fragrance, the life."

Is this not also a true picture of many of our lives? Are not our gifts and powers lying in unopened buds? Are we living at our best? Are our lives as beautiful as they might be? Are we as useful, as thoughtful, as helpful to others, as obliging and kind, as we could be? Is there not need that we pray this prayer continually: "Awake, O winds of God, and blow upon the winter-locked garden of my heart that the chilled life in it may flow out"?

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## A Heart Garden

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The prayer suggests that only the Spirit of God can call out the gifts and powers of our lives. We cannot wake up the love for others in our hearts without the divine inspiration. When Henry Martyn reached India he wrote in his journal, "I desire to burn out for my God." Such a passion can be kindled only by the divine breath. The beautiful qualities of Christian character are not mere natural graces and virtues; they are spoken of in the Scriptures as fruits of the Spirit. If our garden is to come to its true beauty, our prayer must be that the winds of God may awake and blow upon it. Nothing will bring out the life of the gardens and fields after the chill winter but the warmth of the sun. Nothing but the love of God will woo out the spiritual powers and possibilities within us. Even the disciples of Christ, after being with Him for three years, were not ready for service until the wind of Heaven blew upon them on the day of Pentecost.

Two winds are called upon here, or rather one wind in two kinds of effect: "Awake, O north

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## A Heart Garden

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wind, and come, thou south." The chill north wind is needed to clear and purify the air. In spiritual life there is need also for the north wind to prepare for the breath of the south wind. There is the north wind of conviction. We must become conscious of our sinfulness and realize our need of Christ before we are ready to turn to Him. David became penitent and said, "I have sinned," and Nathan said to him, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin." A Jewish tradition relates that at the place where David wept a day and a night over his great sin, an incense tree sprang up. Incense is the emblem of praise. The joy of salvation comes out of the sorrow of penitence. Where the volcanic dust from Mount Pelée settled after the terrible eruption, sweet flowers soon began to bloom. The ashes from great calamities make fruitful soil in human lives in which the graces and virtues grow luxuriantly. The north wind of conviction prepares the air for noble life and strong character.

Then there is also the north wind of sorrow.



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## A Heart Garden

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We dread sorrow, but we have the Master's word that it is those who mourn that are blessed. Christ's marvellous comfort cannot come save where sorrow has been. The north wind must blow with its keen, cleansing blast before the south wind can bring its blessing of love and fruitfulness. When Lord Houghton had lost his wife, Tennyson wrote him this letter: "I was the other day present at a funeral, and one of the chief mourners reached me her hand silently, over the grave, and I as silently gave her mine. No words were possible. And this little note that can do really nothing to help you in your great sorrow is just such a reaching of the hand to you, my old college comrade of more than forty years' standing, to show you that I am thinking of you."

What a thrill of comfort these simple words gave the mourner! His friend poured upon the great wound in his heart the healing love of his own heart. It was the richest, divinest gift Tennyson could have given to his friend. But this he never could have given to him but

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## A Heart Garden

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for the sorrow that opened the way; and we cannot get God's wondrous blessing of comfort—love, sympathy, tenderness, strength, healing—until sorrow has prepared us for receiving it. The north wind must blow upon us with its sharp, biting breath, and then we are ready for the warm south wind to come with its breath of heavenly life. "Come, thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out."

Some who are reading these words understand the meaning of this prayer. There was a day when there was in you a cry for life which was answered. The garden of your heart was winter-locked. There was capacity, almost measureless capacity for beauty, for spiritual fruitfulness, for sweetness, but all these wonderful possibilities were slumbering within you. You were not living at your best. Your life lacked richness, sympathy, tenderness. You were not giving out love in service to others. Your personality was wanting in winsomeness and charm. Your garden was full of trees and plants that had in them possi-

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## A Heart Garden

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bilities of fruitfulness and fragrance, but it was only winter yet, when the time for summer was at hand.

Then came sorrow. You remember the day; you never can forget how the north wind blew upon your heart with its biting breath. At first it seemed that every living thing in your garden must be destroyed. But soon the warm south wind began to pour its soft, gentle breath upon you. It was the love of Christ. It was the breathing of the divine Spirit. "Come, thou south wind," you cried, in welcoming gladness, "blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out." Your prayer was answered. The winter melted, and the fragrant plants and trees gave out their sweetness. Life has meant a thousand times more to you since that day of great sorrow. Many others are feeding now on the fruits of your love. The world is richer for your life and your ministry.

What month is it in which we are living to-day? We say it is October. But is it really October in the calendar of our spiritual life?

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## A Heart Garden

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October is the time of ripe fruitfulness. The farmers are celebrating Harvest Home, and gathering in the products of the summer. October means ripeness. But is it October in our life? Is it really past March yet? March is the month of bare trees, unopened buds, imprisoned beauty, and slumbering life. Is it March, or is it October with us? If it is only March, shall we not pray for the winds of God to blow upon us that the spices of our garden may flow out?

*“Dear Lord, the withered garden in my heart  
Lies parched and dead, cursed by the subtilty  
Of this beguiling world’s prosperity.  
The burdened clouds of heavenly grace depart,  
Ere to my dying soul they life impart,—  
And I am left in sin’s satiety,  
Mocked with the worthless joys of vanity.  
Oh, turn Thine eye on me, and let the dart  
Of Thy restoring love, with power unspent,  
Strike inward, till my quickened life shall show  
The fruit of grace divine, whose sweet descent  
Shall wake my field. O winds of God, now blow  
Till with your breath my grateful praise is blent,  
While spices from my garden overflow.”*

## The Awakening of Life's Glory

*"I ask, O Lord, that from my life may flow  
Such gladsome music, soothing, sweet, and clear,  
From a fine-strung harp, to reach the weary ear  
Of struggling men,  
To bid them pause awhile and listen; then  
With spirit calmer, stronger, than before,  
Take up their work once more.  
I only pray that, through the common days  
Of this, my life, unceasingly may steal  
Into some aching heart strains that shall help to heal  
Its long-borne pain,  
To lift the thoughts from self and worldly gain,  
And fill the life with harmonies divine.  
Oh, may such power be mine!  
Thus would I live; and when all working days  
Are o'er for me,  
May the rich music of my life ring on  
Eternally."*

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## CHAPTER SECOND

### The Awakening of Life's Glory

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NOT one of us ever dreams of all the possibilities of his life. The plainest of us carries concealed splendors within him. If we knew what noble qualities are lying undeveloped in us, what powers are waiting to be called out, what fine things we may achieve in the years before us, it ought to inspire us to our best life and effort. Perhaps no one ever does reach in this world all that he might attain.

In one of the Psalms is a suggestive call to awake. The writer cries to himself as one calling another from sleep: "Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp." His harp had been hanging on the wall silent, its strings untouched, and he would rouse himself that the harp might awake. All of us at times need to make this call upon ourselves.

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## A Heart Garden

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The harps are lying silent in our hearts. We do not rejoice any more. No songs break from our lips.

The figure of instruments of music sleeping is very suggestive. They are capable of giving out rich strains, but not a note is heard from them. Sometimes it is sorrow that silences the song. Sometimes it is weariness. Sometimes it is discouragement. Whatever the cause, it is not fitting that we should remain songless. The ideal Christian life is one of joy. Christ Himself always rejoiced though His life was so full of sorrows. He sang a hymn of praise as He was leaving the upper room for Gethsemane. His harp never was songless. We are not like our Master when our hearts do not sing. We should call upon our silent harps to awake.

But there is a wider application. Our lives are to be songs, but music is not all. "Awake up, my glory." What is this glory that is in a man and that needs to be wakened up? When we think of it, all life is glorious in itself and also in its possibilities. Glory is a great word.



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## The Awakening of Life's Glory

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In the dictionary it has many definitions. It means brightness, splendor, lustre, honor, greatness, excellence. It has in it always a suggestion of something divine. The word is fitly used of human life. It would take a whole library of books to answer the question, "What is man?" An old writer speaks of man as being "not only the noblest creature in the world, but even a very world in himself." Merely to describe the mechanism of the human hand and to give a record of the wonderful achievements the hand has wrought would require a volume. Or the eye with its marvellous structure, or the ear with its delicate functions, or the brain with its amazing processes, or the heart, or the lungs—each of the organs in a bodily organism is so wonderful that a whole lifetime might be devoted to the study of anatomy alone, and the subject would not be exhausted.

Then that is not all of man. Think of the intellectual part, with all that the mind of man has achieved in literature, in science, in art, in invention, in music. Think of the moral

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## A Heart Garden

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part, man's immortal nature, his spiritual nature, that in man which makes him like God, capable of holding communion with God, and of belonging to the family of God. When we begin to think even most superficially of what man is, we see an almost infinite meaning in the word "glory" as defining life.

No one in the highest flights of imagination has ever begun to dream of the full content of his own life, what it is at present, and then what it may become under the influence of divine love and grace. Even now, man is but "a little lower than God." Then "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." The full glory is hidden, unrevealed, as a marvelous rose is hidden in a little bud in spring-time. All we know about our future is that we shall be like Christ. We are awed even by such a hint of what we shall be when the work in us is completed.

The call to awake implies that the glory in us is asleep and needs to be awakened. For one thing, not one of us has more than the

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## The Awakening of Life's Glory

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faintest conception of the greatness, the beauty, the power of his own life. We do not think of ourselves as infolding splendors. We travel over seas to look at scenes of grandeur, to study works of art, to see wonders of nature, while we have in ourselves greater grandeur, rarer beauty, sublimer art, than any land has to show us. We should pray to be made conscious of our own glory.

Then we should seek to awake all these marvellous powers. The harp is standing silent, when it might be pouring out entrancing music. The hand is folded and idle, when it might be doing beautiful things—painting a picture that would charm the world, doing a deed of kindness that would give gladness to a gentle heart, visiting a sick or suffering one and winning the commendation, “Ye did it unto me.” The power of sympathy is sleeping in our hearts when it might be adding strength to human weakness on one of life’s battlefields, making struggling ones braver, and inspiring them to victory.

If we would have our glory waked up we

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## A Heart Garden

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must seek to have all the best that is in us called out. There is a familiar story of Cromwell, that coming upon twelve silver statues he asked, "What are these?" "The twelve apostles," he was told. Then he gave orders that they should be melted down and coined, and the money distributed among the poor. He said the real apostles went about doing good, and would not be pleased to see their statues standing up in niches, merely as ornaments. The glory of our lives is not given us for admiration, for adorning, but for service. Consecration means becoming a living sacrifice.

In one of St. Paul's letters to Timothy the old apostle gave this young man a most earnest charge. He bade him stir up the gift of God that was in him. Timothy was not doing his best. The glory in him was not shining out, was not warming and brightening the world as it should. The picture in St. Paul's mind as he wrote was that of a fire covered up, smouldering, and he bade Timothy stir it up that it might burn into a flame. There

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## The Awakening of Life's Glory

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is no lack of spiritual gifts with splendid possibilities in the hearts and lives of Christian people, but they are not at their best, and need to be stirred up.

We hold ourselves back from the full service to which the Master calls us. We do not like to make sacrifices. We have not realized that there is no true glory in life until it has reached the point of sacrifice.

One was speaking the other day of another who for years had professed faithful friendship, but who the moment that friendship demanded an act of self-denial failed and fell back. Nothing ever really begins to count as worthy living until love passes out of commonplace expression into the splendor of sacrifice. There is no true glory in life—there may be beauty, there may be winsomeness, but there is no glory, in any service for Christ if it stops short of sacrifice. When we cry, "Awake up, my glory," we must be ready to go out to self-denial, to hunger and thirst, to suffering, to death. It is said that when Dr. Temple was Bishop of London he

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## A Heart Garden

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sent a young man to a position involving much hardship. The young man's friends tried to dissuade him from accepting it, and he went to the bishop and told him that he believed he would not live two years if he accepted the appointment. Dr. Temple listened and replied somewhat in this way: "But you and I do not mind a little thing like that—do we?"

We have been used so long to easy-going, self-indulgent ways that our ideal of true Christian life is low. The best in us never has been called out. Perhaps none of us ever has risen to his best in anything. The boys and girls have not reached their best in school—they might have done better. The artist's picture might have been a little more beautiful, a little more artistic in its technique, a little finer in its sentiment. The singer might have sung her song a little better, with more heart, more sweetly, with less of self-consciousness. The best day any of us ever lived we might have made a little whiter, fuller of duties done, more sacred in its memo-

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## The Awakening of Life's Glory

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ries. In Christian life, not one of us is as good, as useful, as unselfish, as thoughtful, as holy in influence, as we might be. We should get this great word "glory," as defining our life, so fixed in our minds that we shall never forget it. The word calls us to our best. No other living is worthy. Recently a Swiss vase, about sixteen inches in height, was put up at auction. It was dated 1763, A.D. No history of it was given. But the vase was so exquisite in its beauty and so surely genuine, that it brought more than twenty thousand dollars. Yet this rare thing was once a mere lump of common clay with a few moist colors on it. The value was in the toil and skill of the artist who shaped and colored it with such delicate patience. He did his best, and the vase witnesses to-day to his devotion and faithfulness.

The frieze on the Parthenon at Athens was chiefly the work of Phidias. The figures were life size and stood fifty feet above the floor of the temple. For nearly two thousand years the work remained undisturbed. Near the close

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## A Heart Garden

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of the seventeenth century the frieze was shattered and its fragments fell upon the pavement. Then it was seen that in the smallest detail the work was perfect. Phidias had wrought for the eyes of the gods, for no human eyes could see his work. We should do perfect work, even when we work most obscurely, for nothing less is worthy the glory of our own life. We should set higher ideals for ourselves. We are not worms of the dust—we are immortal spirits, and this dignifies the lowest thing we do. Sweeping a room for Christ is glorious work. Cobbling shoes may be made as radiant service in Heaven's sight as angel ministry before God's throne. The glory is in ourselves and we must express it in all that we do.

We should never rest content with any achievement or attainment, as if it were the best we can reach. We never get our largest opportunity—there is always new land to discover beyond that which we have taken possession of. Kipling puts it thus in "The Explorer":—



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## The Awakening of Life's Glory

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*"There is no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation."*

*So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—*

*Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station*

*Tucked away below the foothills, where the trails run out and stop,*

*Till a voice as bad as conscience rang interminable changes*

*On one everlasting whisper, day and night repeated—so:*

*"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—*

*Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost, and waiting for you. Go."*

There is no end to the sky. There is no limit to life. There is always something beyond. He who thinks there is nothing further, nothing beyond where he is now, does not understand the meaning of the glory of life. The ancients wrote *Ne plus ultra*, "Nothing more beyond," on the Pillars of Hercules. That was the end of the world, they said. But one

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## A Heart Garden

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man heard the interminable whisper, "A continent beyond. Go and find it," and Columbus sailed away and discovered a new world. We settle down in our little circle of life and opportunity, and suppose we have done our best; but the glory that is in us ever whispers of something greater and worthier, and calls us to go out to find it.

## The Servant of the Lord

*“Meek Jesus, to my soul Thy spirit lending,  
Teach me to live like Thee in lowly love,  
With humblest service all the saints befriending,  
Until I serve before Thy throne above—  
Yes, serving e’en Thy foes, for Thou didst seek  
The feet of Judas in Thy service meek.*

*“O blessed name of servant, comprehending  
Man’s highest honor in his humblest name;  
For Thou, God’s Christ, that office recommending,  
The throne of mighty power didst truly claim.  
He who would rise like Thee, like Thee must owe  
His glory only to his stooping low.”*

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## CHAPTER THIRD

# The Servant of the Lord

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HE Messiah is spoken of in the Old Testament many times as the Servant of the Lord. This may seem a strange name to give to one of such high honor.

We believe that He was divine. How then could He be the Servant of God? Is there not here a contradiction in terms? A servant fills a lowly and a subordinate place. He is one who does the will of another. He does not belong to himself. He cannot make and carry out his own plans. He represents another and comes and goes at the call of another. He receives directions and must obey without question, without liberty of choice. How then could the Son of God be the Servant of the Lord?

We have but to turn to the New Testament to find that Jesus gladly accepted the name

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## A Heart Garden

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and the place of servant. He was the Servant of the Lord in His submission of His life to His Father's will, and His Father's plan. His first recorded words were: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" At the last He declared that He had accomplished all that the Father had given Him to do. He never did His own will, but always God's will. Then, in His relation to men He was also a Servant. When, at the Last Supper, His disciples contended among themselves as to which was greatest, Jesus told them that the world's standard was not to be the standard among them. "But he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Then He added: "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Rising from supper, and girding Himself as a servant, He then washed His disciples' feet, thus doing the work of the lowest and most menial servant.

There is no contradiction, therefore, between the truth of the divine Sonship and this, that He was also the Servant of the Lord.

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## The Servant of the Lord

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Service is not lowly—it is divine. God Himself serves. Those highest in rank in this world are they that serve the most cheerfully, the most self-forgetfully. “Ich dien” is the motto under the triple plume of the Prince of Wales. The origin of the motto dates back more than five hundred and fifty years. It was originally the motto of John of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia, who was killed at the battle of Crécy in 1346. Edward found the King dead on the field, with the royal flag on his breast, and under the crest of three ostrich feathers the words, “Ich dien”—“I serve.” Edward gave it to his son, and now for more than five hundred and fifty years it has been an adopted sign, a heritage of voluntary service. There could be no more royal motto for one to wear who is preparing to rule. A true king is the nation’s first servant. The noblest and most manly man in any community is he who most devotedly, most unselfishly, with sincerest love and interest, serves his fellow-men.

If we would but get this law of service into

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## A Heart Garden

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all our home life, it would make us sweetly thoughtful of every one and lead us to countless attentions and services which would change our homes into places of heavenlike love. If we would learn to serve as Christ did, it would make us think of others about us, not as those from whom we may get some gain, exact some attention or promotion, but as those to whom we may impart some good, render some service.

In one passage in Isaiah there is a wonderful picture of this Servant of the Lord. He works quietly. "He will not cry, nor lift up His voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street." That was not true in those times of the great men of the world who sought to make an impression. They gathered armies and made the earth tremble with their tread. Men were supposed to be powerful according to the noise they made. But of the Messiah it was said, "He will not cry." Jesus wrought quietly. He went about among the people, but moved quietly. He never advertised Himself. He knew that there was no real power in noisy



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## The Servant of the Lord

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cries, that the power was in the words spoken, and not in the scream or shriek with which they were uttered.

Jesus said one day to the people gathered about Him: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It was a quiet word, quietly spoken, but it had in it tremendous power—power which has been going out over the world ever since, like a breath of God, falling into human hearts, wooing weary ones to Christ. Yet that was only one of Christ's countless quiet words. He did not cry, He did not scream or shout, yet never has the world heard such words as He spoke. "You can paint fire," said an old writer, "but you cannot paint heat." It is the heat and not the flame that warms a room. It is not the noise, the elocution, that touches people's hearts and changes their lives—it is the truth which the speaker's voice gives out.

Another feature of the Messiah's work was that "His voice was not heard on the streets." Jesus did not look favorably on the

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## A Heart Garden

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street displays of religion in His days. He did not like the way some men prayed on the highways, making long prayers in conspicuous ways, to be seen of men, to be thought pious and devout. He condemned the giving of alms, when men as it were sounded a trumpet in the streets to call people to come and see how they gave, the real purpose being that they might have glory of men. Jesus had only condemnation for a piety which in any form whatever sought to impress people so as to get the world's praise. No man heard His voice in the streets. This does not mean that He never spoke on the streets. It means that He did no religious act for effect. In His own personal devotions He sought the cover of the night, or rose up a great while before day, and went away to the mountains or into the depths of some quiet garden, or into the desert, when He prayed. He also bade His disciples to enter into their closets and shut their doors when they prayed. This does not mean that they were never to pray in public—we are oftentimes to make our voice heard on

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## The Servant of the Lord

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the streets, both in prayer and in speech for God. But the meaning is that we are never to seek to advertise ourselves or our religion, but are to seek always to get people to see Christ, not to see us.

The Messiah is described also as very gentle. "A bruised reed will He not break, and a dimly burning wick will He not quench." He does not pass by a bruised reed as either worthless or hopeless. He says that it can be restored and that it is worth while to mend it and make it whole again. Of course we understand that it is not mere reeds that the Prophet had in mind. No doubt Jesus was gentle even to broken and bruised plants. His heart is wonderfully loving and kind. We cannot think of Him even as needlessly bruising a rose or the tiniest flower. But what the Prophet means, when he refers to bruised reeds, is lives which have been bruised or hurt by sin or sorrow.

Take the other metaphor, "A dimly burning wick will He not quench." There is no longer any flame in the lamp—there is only a little

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## A Heart Garden

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smoke curling from it, pouring into the room oftentimes offensive odor. This represents a man out of whose life has gone nearly the last influence of the divine Spirit. There seems nothing of hope left, not a trace of anything good. Still there is a faint spark of the life of God remaining in the man's heart. This the Christ will not quench. No soul is ever without hope if only it be committed to the love and care of the Servant of the Lord.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett has given us a beautiful suggestion about the bruised reed. He says it is a common custom in Syria to cut a reed and use it for a staff to lean on when walking. As one climbs a hill, however, and bears more of his weight on his staff, it sometimes gives way and the reed becomes cracked and bruised. All a man can do then with his shattered staff is to break it altogether off and throw it away as a worthless thing. These poor reeds are symbols, Mr. Jowett suggests, of people on whom we have leaned and who have failed us. We trusted them and helped

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## The Servant of the Lord

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them in some time of need in their lives, and they did not prove loyal and true. We showed them kindness when they were in trouble and turned to us for help, and they forgot the kindness. They broke their word to us. The staff became a bruised reed.

Now what should we do? Should we deal harshly with them? Should we cherish vindictiveness toward them? Should we cast them off and say we will have nothing more to do with them? What would Jesus do? "A bruised reed will He not break." We need the gentleness of Christ in dealing with those who have failed us or proved ungrateful for our kindness.

Some one says: "It is more Godlike to love one little child purely and unselfishly than to have a heart filled with a thousand vast, vague aspirations after things we cannot understand." It is more Christlike to keep on loving still and being patient with and kind to one person who has failed us and treated us meanly and ungratefully, forgetting our kindness to him in his sore need, and break-

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## A Heart Garden

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ing his promise to us—it is more Christlike to keep on loving one such person than it is to go about for a whole year doing kindly things for those who are always good to us. Anybody can be kind to those who are kind to him. A Christian should be kind to those who fail him and hurt and wrong him.

This wonderful picture of Christ's gentleness and kindness to men in their last resorts of need suggests to us that we should always live kindly and helpfully toward others. People about us need nothing so much as simple kindness. Hundreds are dying for it—for just such little common kindness as you could show if only you would. One writes:

*"So many gods, so many creeds,  
So many paths that wind and wind,  
When just the art of being kind  
Is all this sad world needs."*

Another quality in the character of this Servant of the Lord is that He never grows disheartened. "He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set justice in the

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## The Servant of the Lord

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earth." Good Christian people sometimes lose heart as they labor faithfully and see no results, as they sow diligently and gather no harvests. It is a splendid tonic for such faintness to read that the Christ is never discouraged; that He will never fail, but will surely finish His work. Let us take this splendid optimism anew into our own hearts. Many of us get disheartened too easily. There is always hurt and danger in discouragement. One hour of losing heart does us harm from which it takes us days to recover. Yielding to disheartenment, even only once, may be the beginning of a weakening process that shall grow into a habit in us, the end of which shall be the loss of all power to be brave and strong any more. The greatest kindness any teacher can do to those he teaches is to help them always to live a life of faith and courage—a victorious life.

There are two little rules which if we would observe them would work a marvellous change in most of our lives. One is, "Never be discouraged." The other is, "Never be a dis-

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## A Heart Garden

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courager." We do not dare to be discouraged, for instantly then we become a discourager, and we can never know the harm we may do to other lives by uttering our fears and doubts.

*"Talk faith. The world is better off without  
Your uttered ignorance and morbid doubt.  
If you have faith in God, or man, or self,  
Say so. If not, push back upon the shelf  
Of silence your thoughts till faith shall come:  
No one will grieve because your lips are dumb."*



## Christ's Call for the Best

*“When I awake, the soul’s deep, yearning quest  
Shall find in perfect love eternal rest.  
Then I shall see Him, even as He is,  
Who, while I wandered, knew and named me His.*

*“When I awaken in the better land,  
Divine Redeemer, like Thee shall I stand.  
Not long the slumber and the dream abide—  
When I awake I shall be satisfied.”*

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### Christ's Call for the Best

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CHRIST knows what is in man. When He looks upon us He sees not only what we are, but also what we may become. The gardener in the early springtime, when he looks at the bare, briery bush in his garden, sees in it a vision of glorious roses—what it will be in June under his culture. Christ looks upon a young life as it stands before Him and sees in it, beneath its unattractiveness, a vision of splendid manhood, and calls for its fulfilment.

When Simon was introduced to Him, Jesus looked upon him intently and said: "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called Peter." He saw the best in the old fisherman. Nobody else saw in him what Jesus saw. Other people saw only uncouthness, an overmeasure of self-confidence, a sort of rugged but undis-

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## A Heart Garden

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ciplined strength, rashness, impulsiveness, a certain coarseness and rudeness. Nobody saw in Simon of the fishing boats anything great or beautiful. But Jesus saw in him large possibilities, elements of power, all that the man afterward became. In the rough, impetuous Simon He saw the firm, strong, and masterful Peter of the apostolic days.

Jesus always saw the best in every man or woman. He saw the possible good there was in the publican, Levi, under all his greed and dishonesty, and called him to be one of His friends. He saw the vision of a white soul in the outcast woman who lay at His feet, and spoke to her words of mercy and hope which saved her. He saw the good waiting to be brought out in every one who came into His presence.

There is something good in every life. Some people never see anything beautiful in any other one. They see, instead, the faults, the blemishes, the follies, the frailties. They see these lacks and flaws because that is what they are looking for. So long as we look upon

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## Christ's Call for the Best

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people in this hopeless way, we cannot do anything to make them better. We must have an eye for the best that is in men, and be able to find beauty and good in every life, if we would inspire them to reach their best.

The new name which Jesus gave this fisherman had in it a vision of the man that was to be. The giving of the name, with its prophecy of strength, security, and worthiness was the Master's call for all that was good in Simon. It would have been a bitter disappointment to Him if the rough fisherman had never become anything but what he was that day. Then what a loss to the world it would have been!

Yet Simon's character was not changed instantly—it was the work of years, even in the hands of Christ, to make the transformation. Work on lives is always slow. Some people speak as if becoming a Christian were a sudden matter, the work of a moment. The beginning of a Christian life may be sudden, a choice, a decision made in an instant—one minute not a Christian, next minute a Chris-

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## A Heart Garden

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tian. But this is only the beginning, and there is a great deal after that. The beginning is only an unopened bud—it takes time for the bud to open into the full, rich beauty of the rose. It often takes God many days to open a little flower. It takes Him much longer to bring a life to its full bloom and beauty.

A child had been playing in the garden one day, and when she came in her mother said, "What have you been doing, my dear?" "Helping God, mother," said the little one. "How have you been helping God?" asked the mother. "I saw a flower going to blossom, and I blossomed it," answered the child. There are some people who think they are helping God when doing just what this child did. God does not want help in opening His buds and blossoming His roses. The buds must be opened and the roses blossomed in nature's gentle way, in God's way. To blossom them before their time would be to ruin them. We need to be most careful in our culture of spiritual life in others, especially in children.

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## Christ's Call for the Best

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Violence and forcing may do incalculable harm. Many a child's life fails of its rarest beauty because its development is hastened. Rose buds want only air, sunshine, and rain to bring out their beauty. The best thing we can do to develop spiritual life is to give an atmosphere of love and purity to those we seek to bless.

The beginning of new life in Simon was when he met with Jesus. A new human friendship oftentimes colors all one's future. To know that somebody cares for us, that somebody is interested in us, means a great deal to any of us. A Christian man tells of finding a poor lame boy in the school he was teaching. The boy was lonely and a cripple. He told the teacher one day a little about himself. His father had been killed in the mill and the family were poor. "I want to be somebody," said the boy, and he won the teacher's heart by his longing. The young man spoke to him encouragingly, laying his hand upon the boy's head and saying, "I want you to know that I love you and will be your friend."

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## A Heart Garden

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That was a divine moment for the little fellow. "Did you say you loved me?" he asked, later. "Yes," replied the teacher. "O sir, if you love me, I will be a man yet, by God's help." It was the love of Jesus for Simon, shown that day in His interest in him and His encouragement, that was the beginning of new life in him. Then the giving of the new name meant a great deal. Jesus believed in him, and that thrilled him with a new hope.

One of the finest secrets of helpfulness is the power to encourage others. Discouragement quenches many noble possibilities, but encouragement is inspiring. You think that you cannot make much of your life, that you cannot do anything good or beautiful. Your friends seem to think so, too, and you settle down to a hopeless feeling of insignificance. Then some one comes who sees capacity in you, who catches sight of a gleam of gold in the sand, who discovers possibilities in your life which you never imagined were there, and tells you what he sees. You know what that means to



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## Christ's Call for the Best

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you. Jesus saw a Peter in the rough Simon before Him. Then Simon began to see the Peter, too.

“Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called Peter.” That is what Christ says to every one of us when we come to Him. He sees in us possible beauty of character and possible power for service, and at once seeks to call out the hidden things in us. The process is not always easy—sometimes it is very hard. It will help us to get it clearly in our minds that the aim of Christ in all the experiences of our lives is definitely this—to train us for fine and worthy manhood. It will steady our faith and help us to trust in time of suffering and trial, if we understand that nothing is purposeless, nothing accidental, that nothing is meant to harm us, that everything is intended to help us toward noble character and fuller, richer life.

Sorrow sometimes staggers us. There is a mystery about it which we cannot solve. One was telling of the intense suffering of a father. He could get no relief save under the

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## A Heart Garden

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influence of strong opiates. At times his pain was almost unendurable. "I cannot understand why God permits it," said his daughter. "He has always been such a good man, so gentle, so kindly, so unselfish, so faithful! Why is it that now he has to endure such suffering?" No one can answer this question definitely, to say just why this good man suffers so sorely, yet we know that blessing and good will surely come out of the experience. Possibly he is suffering that his own life may be made more pure, more radiant. Possibly he is permitted to suffer as a witness for Christ, his patience, trust, and joy being the fruit of the Spirit in him. In some way at least we know that pain is meant to yield blessing—to him who endures it, or to those who look on and note the courage and victoriousness with which it is borne. Of one thing we may always be sure—it is because God loves us that we are called or permitted to suffer.

In one of Ralph Connor's books \* we find the interesting story of Gwen. Gwen was a wild,

\* "The Sky Pilot," Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.

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## Christ's Call for the Best

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undisciplined girl, who lived with her father on a Western ranch. She knew nothing of God or of Jesus Christ. By a terrible accident she was lamed for life. The missionary among the cowboys visited her and found her full of questions. He talked to her about God as the God of love.

"Was it God that let me fall?" she asked.

"Yes, Gwen."

"Why did He let me fall?" and her voice was very firm.

"I don't know, Gwen, dear," he replied.

"He knows."

"And does He know I shall never ride again? Does He know how long the days are, and the nights when I can't sleep? Does He know?" Gwen pressed the question, determined to have an answer.

"Yes, Gwen," answered the minister, with tears in his eyes.

"Are you sure He knows?"

"Yes, He knows all about you."

"Then what do you think of Him, just because He is big and strong, treating a little

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## A Heart Garden

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girl that way?" Presently, after a brief pause, she added, bitterly, "I hate Him."

There was a moment of silence, and then the minister asked: "Gwen, did it hurt you when they put on the plaster jacket?"

"It was awful," she answered. "They had to straighten me out, you know."

"What a pity your father was not there!" said the minister.

"Why, he was there."

"What a cruel shame! Doesn't he care for you any more?"

"Of course he does."

"Why didn't he stop the doctors from hurting you so cruelly?"

"Why, he let the doctors. It is going to help me to sit up and perhaps to walk about a little," answered Gwen with eyes wide open.

"Oh, then they didn't do it just for fun, or for nothing," said the young man. "I mean that your father loves you though he let you be hurt; or rather, he let the doctors hurt you because he loved you and wanted to make you better."

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## Christ's Call for the Best

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Gwen kept her eyes with curious earnestness upon the minister's face until the light began to dawn in hers. "Do you mean," she said shortly, "that though God let me fall, He loves me?"

The minister nodded.

"I wonder if that can be true," she said, as if to herself.

Thus the child of the ranch learned her lesson—that God loved her though He had allowed her to suffer, that He had allowed her to suffer because He loved her. Out of the suffering, too, good came in the end. There were possibilities of beauty in the girl's life which could not be called out while she was well and strong. But when her life was broken, crushed, and laid in helplessness and pain on her bed, then the Master came and sowed in her heart good seeds, the seeds of the Spirit, seeds from heaven's gardens, and at length the flowers of the Spirit were growing in beauty in her life.

"Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called Peter." Between what this wild girl was at

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## A Heart Garden

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the beginning and what she became at last lay all the terrible experience of pain, suffering, anguish, torture. It was in this way that Christ called out the best that was in her. Indeed it was in the same way that the best in Jesus Himself was called out, for we read that He was “made perfect through suffering.”

We should get it settled in our consciousness that the purpose of God for our life here is to have us grow into Christ's thought and ideal for us. The divine purpose for Simon, from the day he was first brought to Christ, was to have him become Peter. The Master has the same vision for each one of us. We are not in this world merely to accomplish a certain amount of work, but to be fashioned into strength and beauty of character. If we would always remember this, we should not be perplexed so often by the mysteries of our lives. If joy is ours, it is to make us better and a greater blessing to others. If sorrow is ours, it is to purify us and bring out some line of Christ's image in us more clearly. If

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## Christ's Call for the Best

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our hopes are disappointed, it is because God has some better thing for us than that which we so earnestly desired. If we are called to endure pain, it is because the best in us can be called out only by pain. If bereavement comes and we are left without the strong human arm we have leaned upon heretofore, it is because there are elements of strength in our life that never could be developed unless the human support were taken away. If our burdens are heavy it is because we grow best under burdens. If we are wronged by others, it is to teach us better the great lessons of patience and sweet temper. If our circumstances are uncongenial and our condition hard, it is that we may be disciplined into self-control, and may learn to be content in whatsoever state we are. Always the Master is teaching us new lessons, making us into the beauty of the pattern He has set for us, and preparing us for greater usefulness and better service.

Christ calls on every one for his best. We have not yet reached the best. There are

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## A Heart Garden

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qualities slumbering in us which, if waked, and called out, would make us nobler, worthier, and more useful. There are gifts in us, even unsuspected now, which if discovered, developed, and given to Christ will add immeasurably to the value of our lives. Think of this old fisherman, pulling ropes, dragging nets, selling fish, blustering, swearing, uncouth, uncultured, yet having in him, undreamed of either by himself or by his neighbors, all the splendid powers which afterward were brought out by Christ's teaching and training, making him one of the mightiest forces for good the world has ever known. There are many Simons to-day, men and women, moving in the commonplaces of life, not doing much for the Master, or to make the world better, yet having in them undiscovered qualities, unimagined powers, which if found and brought out would make them great blessings in the world. The Master is looking upon them with love, saying: "Thou art Simon, only a common man, with little beauty of character, with small powers



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## Christ's Call for the Best

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of usefulness, not doing much good, filling now only a little place; but thou shalt be called Peter, revealing splendid capacities for service and for usefulness, and blessing the world with thy ministry of love."



## What Christ Expects of Us

*If I might only love my God and die !  
But now He bids me love Him and live on,  
Now when the bloom of all my life is gone,  
The pleasant half of life has quite gone by.  
My tree of hope is lopped that spread so high,  
And I forget how summer glowed and shone,  
While autumn grips me with its fingers wan  
And frets me with its fitful windy sigh.  
When autumn passes then must winter numb,  
And winter may not pass a weary while,  
But when it passes spring shall flower again;  
And in that spring who weepeth now shall smile,  
Yea, they shall wax who now are on the wane,  
Yea, they shall sing for love when Christ shall come.*

—CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### What Christ Expects of Us

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CHRIST expects a great deal of His followers. He is not satisfied to have them just as good as other people—He wants them to be better. “What do ye more than others?” is the question with which He tests them.

There are many reasons why Christians should surpass others in their life, and in their character and service. One is, because they have such a leader as Jesus Christ. Leadership is important in all work. Poor leadership is responsible for many a failure. It is so in business. It is so in civic affairs. It is so in war. It is so in church life. We have One going before us who is wise, safe, strong, courageous, unconquerable. With such a leader, Christians should surpass all others in their own personal lives, in their

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## A Heart Garden

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attainments and achievements, in their spiritual growth, in their splendid service, in their heroic struggles, in their victories.

Then Christians should be better and do more than others, because Christ gives ability and strength as well as leadership. His message is not merely, "Follow me"; it is also, "Because I live ye shall live also." He puts His own divine life into those who follow Him. He is reincarnated in them. In themselves they have no more strength than other men, no more wisdom, no more ability. But with the grace of Christ in them, they can accomplish what without Christ's help would be impossibilities. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me," said St. Paul. With divine life in them they should do more than others. The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of duty in the kingdom of heaven. It is Christ's own interpretation of the commandments. That is the way our Master would have His followers live. We do not read far into this sermon without finding that He expects from us a very lofty life. At the very begin-

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## What Christ Expects of Us

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ning we have the Beatitudes. One says to a young friend: "I want to help you to be as beautiful as God meant you to be when He first thought of you." That is what Jesus says to His followers in the Beatitudes. He makes it very plain that He is not content with ordinary religious standards in His disciples. "I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." The common religious life of the day was not the ideal for them.

In His interpretation of the sixth commandment Jesus taught that every bitter thought or feeling is a violation of the law. Anger is murder, hatred is murder. The religious teachers of that day said that men should love their neighbors, but they defined neighbors to mean only a few congenial people. They said expressly that no enemy was their neighbor, and they read the law thus: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." The new interpretation, however, reads:

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## A Heart Garden

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“I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.” The meaning of the words was illustrated further: “For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?” There is a higher standard for Christians than for other people.

The teaching may be applied to home life. The Christian's home should be in every way happier, sweeter, holier, than the home which is not Christian. When Jesus sent out His disciples, He bade them say at every door which opened to them, “Peace be to this house.” To every home where the heavenly messenger is welcomed to-day comes the same benediction, “Peace be to this house.” We are at much pains to please the honored and beloved friend who stays with us a day or a week. We give him the best room. We shape all our household life, our engagements, our occupations, our hours, our meals, our pleas-



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## What Christ Expects of Us

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ures, our conversation, to make him happy. We try to be at our best in our behavior. We seek to make the home atmosphere congenial to him. What kind of home should we make ours when Christ, the Son of God, is our guest? Love should abound. Jesus was glad to be guest in the home of Martha and Mary. If there be any nagging, wrangling, contention, strife, unrest in that home, would He have continued to come and to stay there?

Love should find expression, too, in the Christian home. One writes from a home which is described as beautiful, luxurious, with everything in it that taste can desire, that money can buy, with plenty, with all adornments. But in the centre of all this the letter reveals a hungry heart, crying out for love. All was cold and stately, and without tenderness. A Christian home should be sweetened by affectionate expression.

Then it should be a place of prayer. They say family worship is dying out in many Christian homes. Where family worship dies

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## A Heart Garden

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out the loss to the home is incalculable. It is in prayer that we get the grace we need to make our own life sweet, pure, gentle, kindly. In prayer we call down heaven's peace and love. The gate of prayer opens into heaven and then heaven's pure blessing pours in. At the time of the great darkness in the land of Egypt, there was light in the homes of Israel. There should be light in every Christian home while the worldly home near by is dark. The Christian's home should be happier, brighter, heavenlier, than the one next door where Christ is not a guest.

The same test should be applied to business life. Is the Christian's store a different kind of store from that of his neighbor who is not a Christian? Is the business done in a different way, a way that distinctly characterizes it as ruled by a heavenly spirit? Are different methods employed? Are people who buy goods any surer of being honestly dealt with in Mr. Christian-man's store, than they are in the store of Mr. Worldly-man, on the other side of the street? Do they receive more

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## What Christ Expects of Us

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courteous treatment? Is there a higher standard of business honesty in it?

Is the Christian carpenter a better carpenter, and does he do more skilful and more conscientious work than the carpenter over the way who does not follow Christ? Is the Christian builder a better builder than the one who is not a Christian? Does he put more honest work into his houses, better materials, better masonry, better carpentering, better plumbing, better roofing, than the other man does? "What do ye Christians more than others?"

A successful business man was asked for the primary rule of Christian business life. He answered, "To think of the other man." He said, in explanation: "I can afford to lose in a transaction, but I cannot afford to have my customer lose. I may be the victim of misrepresentation, but I must never allow him to suffer from false statements or from any concealed defects in the goods I sell to him. He must learn to trust me implicitly and to know that I would a hundred times rather suffer

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## A Heart Garden

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myself than to cause or allow him to suffer." This is the only wise business policy, as well as the only right thing to do. A business man cannot afford to take advantage of his customer. It is suicidal for him to do so. He may pocket a little more money once or twice, but he has lost his reputation, which is his best asset. While this is good business, it is also good religion. We must think of the other man's interest as well as our own, before our own. How is it in fact among Christian people? What do Christian business men do more than those who are not Christians? Does the world see any difference?

The same rule should apply in our personal relations with others. Is there anything in our life and character and conduct that distinguishes us from those with whom we associate who are not Christians? Are we better than they are? Are we more patient? Are we more thoughtful and unselfish? Are we kinder and more helpful as neighbors? A Christian woman said: "The rule of conduct that has done most for me in my life I found the other

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## What Christ Expects of Us

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day in a newspaper. It is this: 'Make yourself good, and make other people happy.' ” We are first to make ourselves good, to hold ourselves to a most rigid devotion to high ideals. Some people are a great deal more anxious to make other people good than themselves. They would reverse this rule, and make others good and themselves happy. But that is not Christ's way. It is a bad sign when a Christian is heard complaining about others not being good. It suggests the parable of the mote and the beam, which cannot be too often called to mind by Christian people. It suggests also the Master's word, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” We should look after our own life, that is the only life for which we shall have to give account. We should watch our own temper—this will give us quite enough to do. We should be sure to be honest ourselves, not watching to see if others are honest. We should be holy, loving, true—ourselves. Then, as to others, we should do all we can for them, to help them, to cheer and strengthen them. We

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## A Heart Garden

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should be their friends, to serve them, giving up our own ease to assist them. We should seek to make others happy.

*“Over a winding, wayside wall,  
Ragged and rough and gray,  
There crept a tender, clinging vine,  
Tireless, day by day.  
At last its mantle of softest tint  
Covered each jagged seam;  
The straggling wall half broken down  
Became, with that leafy, tinted crown,  
Fair as an artist’s dream.*

*“O, for the kindness that clings and twines  
Over life’s broken wall,  
That blossoms above the scars of pain,  
Striving to hold them all!  
O, for the helpful, ministering hands,  
Beneficent, willing feet,  
That spread rich mantles of tender thought  
O’er life’s hard places, till time has wrought  
Its healing—divine, complete.”*

Do people see Christ in us who are Christians  
in so marked a way that they know we must

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## What Christ Expects of Us

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be His friends? Are Christian young people so different from young people who are not Christians that no one needs to ask if they are Christians? Do they show by their lives that, though in the world, they are not of the world? Are they less selfish than those who are not Christians? Do they do more deeds of kindness? Are they more reverent? Their names are on the church roll, and they are seen at the communion; are there any other things in them that unmistakably distinguish them from young people whose names are not on any church roll, who are seen at no communion? What should the difference be? Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "Love one to another" means a great deal. It means gentleness, kindness, charity, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, patience, and forbearance. Does the Master see this mark in the young people who call themselves His followers? Is their love so unselfish that its influence pervades the neighborhood where they live, like a sweet

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## A Heart Garden

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fragrance? Are they better than the world's young people? "What do ye more than others?"

The word "do" in the Master's question should be emphasized. Jesus does not ask, "What believe ye more than others?" It is well to believe right. Wrong beliefs lead to wrong living. But that is not the test our Master sets. "What do ye more than others?" is His question. There are some who believe splendidly but do almost nothing. It is doing that is the distinguishing mark of those who love Christ. Others hear; these do. Those who please Christ are those who do His will. His followers are sent out into the world, not merely to know, to believe, to make profession of His name, to dream, but to do. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Knowing is well, but doing must follow. He who only hears Christ's words and does them not is like a man who built his house upon the sand. But he who hears the words of Christ and does them builds on the rock, and his life shall be secure forever.



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## What Christ Expects of Us

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*"They lived ! were useful, died, and are unknown.  
They did their work, and then they passed away,  
An unknown band.  
Were they young or old, rich or poor?  
Only one thing is known of them—they were  
Faithful and true.  
They loved the sweetness of another name  
And lived to God.  
Had they honours, crowns and praises?  
No glory clusters round their names on earth,  
But in God's heaven  
Is kept a book of names of greatest worth,  
And there is given  
A place for all who did the Master's work."*



## The Lesson of Perfection

*If suddenly upon the street  
My gracious Saviour I should meet,  
And He should ask, "As I love thee,  
What love hast thou to offer me?"  
Then what could this poor heart of mine  
Dare offer to that heart divine?*

*His eye would pierce my outward show,  
His thought my inmost thought would know;  
And if I said, "I love thee, Lord,"  
He would not heed my spoken word,  
Because my daily life would tell  
If verily I loved him well.*

*If on the day or in the place  
Wherein He met me face to face  
My life could show some kindness done,  
Some purpose formed, some work begun,  
For His dear sake, then it were meet  
Love's gift to lay at Jesus's feet.*

—C. F. RICHARDSON.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### The Lesson of Perfection

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ANY people stumble over the word perfect, as used in the Bible. It occurs frequently. Yet we know that the perfect men of the Bible were not sinless. Noah became drunk. Abraham certainly equivocated, if he did not lie directly. Job got provoked and said bitter things against his friends. Then St. Paul, in the same chapter in which he speaks of himself and others as perfect, says: "Not that I am already made perfect, but I press on."

Perfection, therefore, does not always mean sinlessness. Sometimes it means the final, complete attainment; then sometimes the word is used only relatively. Noah was perfect in his generation, but if he had lived in these Christian days, his life and conduct would have fallen woefully below the true standard of

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## A Heart Garden

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saintliness. A teacher says of her little pupil, "She plays perfectly." She means that the pupil has mastered her exercises and has played them without making a mistake. But the child has been taking lessons only one term. "Perfectly" refers to the pupil's work as a beginner, while there yet are years and years of study and practice before her. A green apple may be perfect as a green apple, but it is not a perfect apple yet; it is not ripe, mellow or luscious, as it will be weeks or months later. A child Christian may be perfect as a child Christian, untempted, undisciplined, untrained, inexperienced as yet, beautiful in its innocence and simplicity, with hard lessons yet to learn. But forty or fifty years later its life will mean far more.

A mother and her child sit side by side in the same company. Both love Christ and are following Him. The girl is sweet, beautiful, a picture of grace. She never has known a struggle, has scarcely ever been called to make a sacrifice, has never found it hard to do right. Her face is fair, without a line. The

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## The Lesson of Perfection

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mother has had cares, struggles, and fights with evil, has endured wrongs, has carried burdens, has suffered, has had bitter sorrows, has been misunderstood, has poured out her life in love's sacrifices. One would say that the child is the more beautiful, the fairer and lovelier in her life. But as the two appear in the eyes of Christ, while both are beautiful, the mother wears the holier loveliness. She has learned in suffering. She has grown stronger through her enduring of struggle. The lines on her face, which seem blemishes on her fair beauty, are the marks of Jesus Christ. The recruit who entered the ranks only yesterday, and who never has seen a battle, seems by far the handsomest soldier in the regiment, with his gay dress, clean armor, and unscarred face. But the old soldier who is the veteran of a score of battles, though his uniform is soiled and torn, his gun blackened with powder, his face marked with wounds and scars—is not he the more perfect soldier?

In the passage in which our Lord sets the

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## A Heart Garden

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ideal of perfectness for His followers He is referring to the way God loves. Men's love is imperfect, partial, incomplete. Men love only those who love them. But that is not worthy of being called love at all. God loves in a complete, perfect way. He loves the unlovely, He loves sinners, enemies. "Ye, therefore, God's children, ought to love as your Father loves."

It was the teaching of our Lord's times that men should treat others as others treated them. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus gave a new interpretation, however: "I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Just what did He mean? It is not often in our times that one slaps another in the face. But what kind of actual treatment does face-slapping stand for? It may be regarded as a type of any kind of personal insult, wrong, or injury. If we would know just what Jesus wanted us to understand by His words, we have only to turn to His own life. When, on His trial, an



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## The Lesson of Perfection

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officer struck Him with his hand, did He literally turn the other cheek? No; He quietly asked why He had been smitten. He did not return blow for blow. He bore the insult without resentment, without bitterness, although He challenged its justice. When we follow the life of Jesus carefully and note His conduct, we find that He was always most gentle and patient in dealing with ill treatment. He did not resent evil; He did not contend for His rights. He endured wrong, and even insult, without complaining. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. There are certain trees which, when struck, only bathe with fragrant sap the axe that cuts into them. Injuries and hurts inflicted upon Jesus brought out the sweetest qualities in Him. They drove nails through His hands, and then the blood that they crushed from Him became the blood of the world's redemption.

We can scarcely find a place in this world where personal injuries and wrongs will never touch us. People will not always deal with us kindly and fairly. There will always be some-

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## A Heart Garden

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body who is not gentle, or who misunderstands us, somebody who says bitter words which hurt our feelings, one who slights us, does not invite us to some social function, or does something which seems to us to be like a slap in the face. What should we do as Christians? Should we act just as the world's people act in similar cases? Mr. Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, referring to certain qualities in Gladstone's character and conduct which were inspired by his beliefs and convictions as a Christian, says, in effect: "There was no worldly wisdom in these lines of action," and adds: "But, then, what are people Christians for?" They belong to Christ. They wear Christ's name. They live by a code of heavenly laws. If they are not different from other people, they are falling below the glory of their calling. People think meekness and patience in enduring wrong marks of weakness. No; they are marks of strength. That is what Christians are for.

There are some people who exact a great deal of their friends. It is so even in some homes.

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## The Lesson of Perfection

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One of the specific illustrations Jesus gives tells how to treat such exactions. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two." In every life there are compulsions—things we have to do, not of choice, but of necessity. There is much selfishness in the world, and there are those who must endure its grind. There are two ways of submitting to these impositions and exactions. We may do it sullenly, with bitterness and repining; or we may do it cheerfully, with a song, in the spirit of love. Then the Master says that we are to do even more than we are required to do. We only make life harder for ourselves when we do unpleasant duties in a bitter, sullen way. We take the unpleasantness out of our unwelcome tasks when we do them in a loving, cheerful way. Some people have a hard time getting along with others because they measure everything and insist on never going a step farther and never doing a thing more than the strictest interpretation of duty requires. There are even husbands and wives who live that way—careful, on the one hand,

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## A Heart Garden

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to exact of each other every particle of duty, yet careful also, on the other hand, never to do a particle more than the letter of duty demands.

Yet that is not love's way. If one mile is down in the compact, love goes two, and goes cheerfully. If courtesy requires a little attention, love shows twice what is called for. We are to overdo our kindnesses rather than make them exact fulfilments of rules of etiquette. We are to give help, not merely to meet pressing need, but to more than meet it. That is the way to carry out the lesson: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Or take the other duty used by the Master in illustration — loving one's neighbor. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." Certainly, but they reserved the privilege of deciding who their neighbor was. He must be a congenial man, a man who belonged to the same set. He must be a man who would not fail to return kindnesses in a generous way,

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## The Lesson of Perfection

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showing favor for favor. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." The words are quite familiar to us, but do we try to live them any more than the Jews in our Lord's time did? How many of us really love our enemies? How many of us actually pray for those who persecute us? That is what we must do if we are going to learn our lesson: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

It is easy enough to love certain people and to be kind to them. It is easy in our evening prayer to ask God to bless those who have been kind to us during the day, who have spoken approvingly or encouragingly to us, who have helped us over the hard places, whose love has brightened the way for us; but is it as easy to pray for the man who was angry with us, the one who spoke falsely of us, or the other who refused the favor we asked and tried to injure us? Yet that is the way the lesson runs: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." When we have

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## A Heart Garden

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learned really to do these things, we are drawing very near to God. Then the word is being fulfilled in us: "Ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." But while we still hate others, while we are bitter against them, or while we are envious or grudging, we have made little progress toward perfection. "For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?"

Here we have the test question of Christian living: "What do ye more than others?" It is not enough that Christians shall be just as good as other people,—Christ expects them to be better. What are people Christians for, if not to do more than others? "Ye therefore shall be perfect."

Christian love ought to show itself in all holy service, in thoughtfulness toward others, in kindness, in readiness to help. It is said that when Dr. Temple, afterward Archbishop Temple, was head-master of Rugby School

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## The Lesson of Perfection

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he visited the boys one day when they had been sent to clean out the pig sties. One of the boys went to him and said: "Am I forced to do this dirty task?" "I suppose not," he replied; "you are not exactly forced." "May I go, then, sir?" asked the student. "Yes," answered Dr. Temple slowly. "Give me the rake." The student was about handing him the rake when he saw the head-master taking off his coat. He was going to do the dirty work himself. The student said: "I don't want you to do it, sir." "Somebody must do it," was the reply. The young man took the rake and did the work, and never grumbled any more. Thus it was that Christ took His place in life, not as a mere master, but as one who served. He took the lowest place. When none of His disciples would do the servant's part, when they shrank from it and asked, "Must we do it?" He answered: "No; you are not forced to do it. Give me the basin and the towel." And before they knew what He was doing, He was on His knees, washing their feet. How the Master's lowly service

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## A Heart Garden

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shamed the proud disciples that night! How it ought to shame us to-day, when we are still too proud to take the servant's place and do the hard and lowly things! Let us learn the lesson as the Master Himself illustrated it: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." If we are ever to reach that blessed attainment, we must begin to do the things of perfection now and here.



## Following Our Visions

*“Just a little farther on—just a little farther on—  
Oh, the happy days that lure us when these days of stress  
are gone!  
Days of restfulness and pleasure, days of garnered joy  
and treasure,  
All the harvest-homes of dreamland—just a little farther  
on.*

*“What a hope to keep them smiling—faces wistful, faces  
wan!  
What a spur to faint endeavor till the crushing task is  
done!  
Oh, ’twould be a sorry showing life would make for  
God’s bestowing  
If the good time did not beckon—just a little farther on.”*

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Following Our Visions

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WE call certain men visionary. They are always seeing visions and dreaming dreams, but their visions and dreams are never realized. Raphael was once asked how he painted his wonderful pictures. He answered: "I dream dreams and I see visions, and then I paint my dreams and visions." That is what we should do with all the beautiful and noble things that come into our hearts and minds as we think and ponder. Everything lovely that rises before us in thought and feeling we should set to work to make true in our life and character.

We see heavenly visions sometimes in books, as we read the thoughts that others have written. Every book that is worth reading sets some noble ideal before its readers. The test of a good novel, from a moral point of

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## A Heart Garden

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view, is found in the impression it leaves on those who read it, the vision it puts into their hearts. If it is merely sentimental, if it has no high aim, if it does not inspire us to live more heroically, more helpfully, more kindly, more unselfishly, and to attain better things in character, it is not worth while to read it. But every book that starts in us the longing to make more of our life, or that causes us to desire to be truer-hearted, gentler, purer, more Christlike, is a book worth while, and we should be obedient to its vision.

Every beautiful life we see presents also before us a heavenly vision. Christ reveals Himself in His friends. There are some Christians who, by reason of their beautiful life, sweet spirit, and noble faithfulness, make us instinctively think of Christ. One said of another: "You have only to shake hands with that man to feel that he is a follower of Christ." A little child, when asked if he knew about Jesus, said: "Yes, He lives in our street." There was some one the child knew who was so beautiful in spirit, so gentle, so

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## Following Our Visions

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kind, that he visioned forth the child's thought of Christ. Many of us know such a person. We cannot do anything mean or false or wrong in his presence.

*"Each soul whispers to itself: 'Twere like a  
breach*

*Of reverence in a temple, could I dare  
Here speak untruth, here wrong my inmost  
thought.*

*Here I grow strong and pure; here I may yield  
Without shamefacedness the little brought  
From out my poorer life, and stand revealed  
And glad and trusting, in the sweet and rare  
And tender presence which hath filled this air!'"*

In every such life a heavenly vision is granted to us to which we should be eagerly, earnestly obedient. It is a call to us to come up higher. Its influence upon us should be refining, inspiring, purifying.

If our devotional life is sincere, we are ever looking upon heavenly visions. What is prayer? It is coming into the very presence of Christ. John was not nearer when he lay upon his Lord's bosom, nor Mary when she

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## A Heart Garden

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sat at His feet and listened to His words, than we are when we pray or read the Scriptures, or when we sit at the communion table. There rises before us in such sacred moments a vision of what we ought to be, of what Christ would have us become, of what we may attain through grace. In such experiences all that is best in us struggles to become real in our life and character. In the holy light we see the faults and flaws in our character and are ashamed of them. We have a glimpse of ideal spiritual beauty and long to reach it. We should not allow such visions of the true life to rise before us, and then be just the same faulty persons afterward as we were before—we should go away to grow toward the beauty of our visions.

Every time we worship reverently in our Father's house our hearts are lifted up. We look into God's face, and have new visions of life and of duty. What kind of persons ought we to be after such experiences? How much influence do our Sundays have on our Mondays? How much better are we after see-

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## Following Our Visions

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ing Christ? Are we obedient to the heavenly visions?

Christina Rossetti in one of her poems tells how once, in a dream, she saw the lovely flowers that bloom in Paradise, more fair than waking eyes ever saw on earth, and how she saw the Beautiful Gate, and had a glimpse of the supernal splendors of the home of the blessed, and then adds:

*I hope to see these things again,  
But not as once in dreams by night;  
To see them with my very sight,  
And touch and handle and attain;  
To have all heaven beneath my feet  
For narrow way that once they trod;  
To have my part with all the saints,  
And with my God.*

That is very beautiful. But we need not wait to get to heaven to realize our heavenly visions. We should seek to make them real, in some measure at least, in this world.

Sometimes after ecstatic experiences in certain holy moments our fervor is kindled and we think we are ready for great heroisms, for

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## A Heart Garden

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large tasks, for splendid self-denials. But the test of life to which most of us are called during the week will not be in conspicuous things which people will talk about, but in the little common things of the common days. Charles Wagner tells us that, instead of living among the stars, we would better learn to love the flowers that grow at our feet. A heavenly vision which we cannot bring down into our common every-day life means very little for us. In one of Murillo's pictures we see the interior of a convent kitchen. Instead, however, of mortals in working dress, we see angels in white garments at the lowly work. One is putting the kettle on the fire, another is lifting a pail of water, another is at the dresser reaching up for dishes. Then there is a little cherub wanting to help, but continually getting in the way of the others and hindering them. The artist means that we may bring heaven down into all the lowly ways of earth, and that even kitchen service may be made as heavenly as work of angels in heaven.



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## Following Our Visions

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More heavenly grace is required ofttimes for the common tasks than would be needed for great things. There are times when we think we could go to the martyr's death for Christ, but cannot even keep sweet under provocation, or be kind to a disagreeable neighbor, or bear opposition. If we would obey the heavenly visions that come to us on Sunday we must be Christlike in all little things or ways on Monday. One writes on living out visions:

*"I have seen the vision of thee, O Christ!  
Now what wilt thou have me to do?  
For the hardest work in all the world  
I offer Thee service true."*

*"Go back, my child, to thy little cares;  
Thou hast known them very long.  
Bear for me yet a little while  
Thy feeling of bitter wrong."*

*"Lord Christ, I am ready for martyrdom  
For banishment, death or pain."  
"Patiently still thine heartache hide;  
Sing at thy task again."*

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## A Heart Garden

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*"I am strong and eager and loving, Lord;  
I have courage rare to endure."*

*"Are thine ears averse to slander, child?  
Is thine heart devout and pure?"*

*"Glad art thou in thy neighbor's joy?  
Sufferest thou his need?"*

*Ah, then I know that thou hast seen  
The vision of my face indeed!"*

There are visions of human need which inspire love in men's hearts and send them out to do Christ's work in marvellous ways. The vision of a lost race brought Christ to this world and His compassion for sinning and perishing men led Him to His cross. A vision of heathen lands in their darkness and sin leads earnest souls to volunteer for foreign mission work. Pity for needy ones in the great cities has led noble men and women to give their lives to the work of rescuing the fallen and the outcast.

The story of Dr. Barnardo, the friend of waifs and strays, is a story of obedience to a heavenly vision. One bitter winter's night one

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## Following Our Visions

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of the boys Dr. Barnardo had been teaching asked leave to remain all night in the stable where the little school was held. "Oh, no! run away home," said the doctor. "Got no home," said the boy. "Be off," said the teacher sharply; "go to your mother." The boy said he had no mother, had no father, didn't live anywhere, had no friends. Dr. Barnardo talked with him further, and learned that he was only one of many waifs who literally had no home, no father, no mother, no friends, lived nowhere. The boy led him out—it was midnight—and showed him where a number of these boys stayed. Peeping into barrels, boxes, and holes, and striking matches, he found at last a woe-begone group of eleven poor boys, from nine to eighteen years old, sleeping in all postures, clad in their rags, with nothing to cover them, exposed to the bitter wind—a spectacle to angels and men, sorrowful enough to break any heart of love.

"Shall I wake 'em up?" asked Jim Jarvis, the boy-guide who had brought Dr. Bar-

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## A Heart Garden

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nardo to this scene of want. "Shall I show you another lay, sir? There's lots more." But the young student had seen enough. Sick at heart, he went home, saddened, amazed, bewildered, but the vision of misery and wretchedness he had seen led to his devoting his life to the saving of waifs and strays. During the forty years that he lived, giving himself wholly to this one work, he rescued more than fifty thousand children from the gutter, fed them, trained them, and set most of them, at least, in honest ways of life. He organized a great rescue work which is going on, now that he is gone. All this because he was not disobedient to the vision which broke upon his eyes that cold midnight.

Wherever a vision of suffering, of need, of degradation, of want, or of sin is shown to us, it should be regarded as a call to us to do something to give relief, to rescue, or to save.

The Scriptures present certain visions of heavenly life which are meant to draw us up to their own high ideal. One of these is love.

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## Following Our Visions

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“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,” said the Master. The rule of love He also gave: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” St. Paul writes out the lesson of love in words with which all are familiar:

*Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

These words, as we think of them, bring up a heavenly vision before us. Love, first of all, sweetens the disposition, the spirit, the temper, the manners, the whole life. Then it makes us interested in others. In a Salvation Army Rescue Home there is a motto on the mantelpiece, consisting of only one word—“Others.” That is the key-word of Christianity—“Others,” never self. Self is a blight-

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## A Heart Garden

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ing spirit. It quenches all that is beautiful in any life. It is like the upas-tree; in its atmosphere nothing lovely will grow. "Others" is Christ's word. He forgot Himself. He lived to bless others. He died to save others. His gospel teaches us to do the same. He bids us go two miles when only one mile is required, to forget self and gladly to make any sacrifice in saving and helping others. There is a story of a boy who, when his little brother feared to leap over the crack in the ice, laid himself down across it, making a bridge of his body on which his brother crept over. That is what love requires us to do—become a bridge over streams and chasms, over needs and difficulties, on which others may cross to better things, to new hope and joy and success.

George Macdonald teaches this lesson in a striking way. A little child asks the traveller what lies over the hill, and he says there is a hill, then a valley, then a brook, then more hills and valleys, and a river now and then, leading at last to a stair,—

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## Following Our Visions

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*Built of all colors of lovely stones,—  
A stair up into the sky,  
Where no one is weary, and no one moans  
Or wants to be laid by.*

Then the child eagerly cries:

*"I will go."—"But the steps are very steep;  
If you would climb up there,  
You must lie at the foot, as still as sleep,  
A very step of the stairs.*

*"Feet of others on you will stand  
To reach the stones high-piled.  
But One will stoop and take your hand,  
And say, 'Come up, my child!'"*

The way to climb upward on this great heavenly stair of love is to be a stone, a step of the stair, on which feet of others will press as they go upward. This is the vision. If we are obedient to it, it will lead us at last to blessedness.





## The One Thing to Do

*“Trust Him in the common light;  
Trust Him in the awesome night;*

*“Trust Him when the earth doth quake;  
Trust him when thy heart doth ache;*

*“Trust Him when thy brain doth reel  
And thy friend turns on his heel;*

*“Trust Him when the way is rough,  
Cry not yet, ‘It is enough!’*

*“But obey with true endeavor,  
Else the salt hath lost his savor.”*

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### The One Thing to Do

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WE have but one thing to do in any circumstances—to obey Christ. We have nothing to do with the question of wisdom or unwisdom. Peter thought he knew all about fishing, but when his Master bade him cast the net at a certain point, though he thought nothing would come of it, his reply was: “At thy word I will.”

It would make Christian life a great deal more simple for us if we would get it definitely settled in our minds that obedience is the one thing in discipleship. It is never ours to consider the expediency of any command that is given to us, or to inquire as to the probabilities of success or failure in what we are bidden to do. The moment our duty is clear, it is ours to do it without question, without doubting, without reasoning. It is the

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## A Heart Garden

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lack of this prompt, energetic, unreasoning obedience that is the cause of so much indefiniteness, indecisiveness, vacillation, and weakness in many Christian lives. We say we are saved by faith, and our thought of faith is apt to become intellectual, theological, or perhaps emotional. But the faith that counts with God is the faith that obeys instantly, and without question, every word of Christ. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," is the law of Christian life.

The lesson applies to our work in this world. What are we here for? God has a plan for every life, and for each individual life. There is no jumbling together of people, indistinguishably, in crowds, in the divine plan. Even the least and the lowliest life has a place all its own in the universe of God, which it must fill, or there will be a blank in the great scheme. Dr. Peabody says: "Taken by itself, your life is certainly a very insignificant affair; but placed as you happen to be placed, in a universe which God has made, your life becomes of infinite importance. For God has

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## The One Thing to Do

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chosen to work out His plan not in spite of you, but through you; and where you fail He halts. Almighty God needs you. . . . It is as though you were a lighthouse keeper, set to do your duty on your bare rock. Can any life be more unpraised or insignificant? Why sit through the weary nights to keep your flame alive? Why not sleep on, all unobserved, and let your little light go out? Because it is not your light—that is the point. You are not its owner—you are its keeper. That is your name—you are a light-keeper. You are set there with this as a trust.” It is this that lifts our little life out of insignificance and gives us an importance in the universe of God which is stupendous in its grandeur and its responsibility. To fail in our place is to interrupt some purpose of God.

How are we to find out what our place in the universe is, and what we ought to do with our life? Does anyone know, and can anyone show us, but He whose we are, who has made us and planned for our course? We see at once that if we leave God out of our life, ig-

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## A Heart Garden

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nore Him, fail to recognize Him as our Master, seek no direction and guidance from Him, we can only wreck our career. The only ambition in life that is wise and safe is the ambition to be what God made us to be, to do what God sent us into the world to do, to fulfil the divine purpose for our life. And it follows that only Christ can guide us in choosing our place and our work.

Many young people stand hesitating long when the time comes for them to decide upon their life course. Ask the divine Master what He wants you to do. Perhaps the answer will not be to your taste. You do not incline to it, or you think you have not the qualification for it. Do you think your all-wise Master would call you to this work or duty if He did not know that you can do it, and do it well? When God came to Moses in the wilderness, where he was herding a few sheep, and called him to lead his people out of bondage, Moses begged off. God had to reason with him and urge him before he would consent. Suppose he had continued to plead his unfit-

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## The One Thing to Do

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ness, his inability, and had finally refused, what would the refusal have meant to Moses? Think of the honor he would have missed. One writes:

*"Had Moses failed to go, had God  
Granted his prayer, there would have been  
For him no leadership to win,  
No pillared fire, no magic rod,  
No wonders in the land of Zin,  
No smiting of the sea, no tears  
Ecstatic shed on Sinai steep,  
No Nebo, with a God to keep  
His burial; only forty years  
Of desert, watching with his sheep."*

We do not know what noble service we are refusing, what high honor we are missing, when we decline the work to which God calls us, either because it is not to our taste or because it seems too hard for us or is too obscure. Why should we differ in judgment from our Master when He asks us to do anything for Him, when He calls us to any particular work? Why should we tell Him that we cannot do what He bids us to do? Does

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## A Heart Garden

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not He know what we can do better than we do? Was not this His thought for us before we were born? Has not He made us for the very service to which He would now send us?

Sometimes people think they are showing humility when they decline some important work which comes to them. They say they are not worthy to do it. Humility is one of the noblest of the graces. But it is not true humility that shrinks from any call or bidding of God. It was not true humility in Moses that pleaded unfitness for the service to which the Lord was calling him. It would not have been humility in Peter or John if they had told Jesus that they were not worthy to be apostles, or had not education enough. It is not humility in any Christian that says, "I cannot; I am not good enough; I am too insignificant," when he is wanted by the Master for any Christian work. It is not humility—it is disobedience; it is refusing to take the place for which you were made. Though the work to which we are called may not be alto-



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## The One Thing to Do

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gether to our mind, though it really seems too great for us, too honorable, or requires too much wisdom or skill, if Christ commands it, let us answer, "Master, I will do it." Then as we leap forward to obey, all the strength and wisdom we need for the work will be given to us.

Another application of the lesson is to the events and circumstances of our lives. Simon thought the command of his Master did not show practical wisdom. Jesus did not understand fishing. Simon knew far more about that particular subject than his Master did. So he was not disposed to drop his nets into the deep waters. Yet, not to grieve his Lord, he did obey Him. Instantly he learned that Jesus really knew about fishing. Jesus knows about everything. The way He would lead us does not seem to us the best way. We cannot see how good can come out of this particular experience. But here again we may depend upon the wisdom and the love of Christ. Is He not wiser than we are? Does not a child, with even common thoughtfulness, soon learn

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## A Heart Garden

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that there are matters which a good and wise father understands better than the child does?

*“ A little child, with lessons all unlearned,  
And problems all unsolved, before me stands.  
With tired, puzzled face to me upturned,  
She holds her slate within her outstretched  
hands:  
‘ My sums are hard; I cannot think to-night;  
Dear father, won’t you make the answer  
right ? ’ ”*

We understand this in children who have learned that their father is wiser than they are. Why should not we older children learn that there are things in which our Father is wiser than we, and that we should be willing to entrust to His care every experience of our lives?

*“ And so I come to thee, O Father, dear.  
My lessons are so hard, my brain so weak,  
Life’s problems all unsolved, my way not clear,  
The answers wrong. Thy wisdom I would  
seek;*

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## The One Thing to Do

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*I am so tired, and sad, and worn to-night—  
Oh, take my life and make the answer  
right.”*

The evangelist, Mr. Charles M. Alexander, relates a story he heard a woman tell in a Friends' meeting. She quoted the words in the prophet's description of the Messiah, "The government shall be upon His shoulder." Then she gave two illustrations. She told first of a good woman with a large family and many household cares, who became very ill. She was in great distress, not knowing how she could be spared from her tasks, how the affairs of her home could be carried on without her. Then an old and trusted servant came into her room and volunteered to take charge of everything. "Give yourself no anxiety," she said. "Everything will go on beautifully." So the good woman turned over everything to the faithful servant—her pocketbook, her keys, all the care and all the planning. So we may trust Christ with all our affairs and let Him do all for us. "The government shall be upon His shoulder."

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## A Heart Garden

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The other story was of a boy who was out driving with his father. The father said: "You may choose to-day where we shall go, on what roads and to what places." The boy replied: "No, father, I do not want to choose the way. You always choose the loveliest roads and find the way to the most beautiful spots. I know I could not make the drive half so pleasant as you will." Then the father said: "Would you not like to drive, then?" But again the boy declined. "I don't want to drive, father. You drive so carefully. You always find the smoothest roads. You never take the wrong way. You never run against stones. If I drove I know I should run over rough places, and we would be jolted. I would rather have you drive." The boy had learned that his father could find better ways and would drive more safely than he could, and so he preferred just to sit in the carriage and let his father choose the way.

When we read of Christ that the government is upon His shoulders, why should we not rejoice to leave in His hands the guidance and

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## The One Thing to Do

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the protection of our lives? Think how wise He is—knowing all things, knowing how to choose the best for us. Who does not know that this is better, safer, wiser than if we were to choose the way for ourselves?

Martin Luther, referring to care for to-morrow says: “I have one preacher that I love better than any other on earth; it is my little tame robin, who preaches to me daily. I put his crumbs upon my window sill, especially at night. He hops onto the window sill when he wants his supply, and takes as much as he desires to satisfy his need. From thence he always hops to a little tree close by, lifts up his voice to God and sings his carol of praise and gratitude, then tucks his little head under his wing, goes fast to sleep, and leaves to-morrow to look after itself. He is the best preacher that I have on earth.”

We sometimes say that love is the greatest thing in the world, but love always ends in obedience. We say faith is great, and so it is. It will remove mountains. It enables us to do impossible things. But faith always leads

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## A Heart Garden

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to obedience. So there is a sense in which obedience is the greatest thing in the world. No matter where we are, in what circumstances, in what confusions and perplexities, we have only to find the will of the Master and do it. No matter in what troubles we are, in what meshes of trial, in what plots of enemies, this is always the way out. The way to the light, to the joy, to the liberty, is along a plain, straight way—the way of obedience.

*“ I said unto myself: ‘ My way is barred;  
The cliff is high and grim and tempest-scarred.’  
Yet step by step I mounted it, till, lo,  
I felt the free air on the summit blow!*

*“ I said unto myself: ‘ My strength is small,  
And I am weary and I fear to fall.’  
And lo! an angel took me by the hand  
And led me safely where I feared to stand.”*

## As Living Stones

*'Tis the Master who holds the mallet,  
And day by day  
He is chipping whatever environs  
The form away,  
Which, under his skilful cutting,  
He means shall be  
Wrought silently out to beauty  
Of such degree  
Of faultless and full perfection,  
That angel eyes  
Shall look on the finished labor  
With new surprise,  
That even His boundless patience  
Could grave His own  
Features upon such fractured  
And stubborn stone.*

—MARGARET PRESTON.



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## CHAPTER NINE

### As Living Stones

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**N** architecture the corner-stone occupies an important place in the building. It is the starting-point in construction. The figure is used in the New Testament, where Jesus Christ is called the corner-stone of the great spiritual temple which is rising through the ages. In this case the corner-stone seems to include the whole foundation on which the building rests. Everything in Christian life rests on Christ. To leave Christ out of life, out of any hope, or trust, or joy, or plan, is to build on the sand. To have Christ as the ground of our hope, our trust, our confidence, is to build on the eternal rock.

But while the corner-stone is the most important stone in a building there are hundreds, thousands, of other stones that go into the

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## A Heart Garden

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walls, and each one is important in its place. A corner-stone alone does not make a building. Every true Christian is a stone in the temple. Believers on Christ are called "living stones." Everything that belongs to Christ is living. Nothing dead has any place in His church. There is no such thing as a dead Christian.

The stones built into a wall are of many different sizes and shapes. Some are large, some are small, some are only little fragments used in filling in the interstices. Among Christian people there are all measures of strength and ability. There are those that are great, fitted for large positions. There are those that are small in their capacity or experience. But every one has his place, and is important in his place. Some Christians fill a place of very great usefulness. They seem to be essential. Every church has its members who bear much of the burden and the responsibility. In every community there are those who are very useful. The weary and the discouraged turn to them for strength and help. But there are only a

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## As Living Stones

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few such great Christians in any particular church, while there are many of lesser power to bless. Yet the smallest and least important have also their place; and it is just as necessary that the little places shall be filled, and well filled, as that the greatest and most conspicuous positions shall be occupied.

The tendency is for those with small gifts to say: "My little will not be of any value. I could drop out and not be missed." But this is not true. The widow's mites meant more that day in the temple-offering than the gifts of the richest Pharisee. The youngest and weakest Christian in any church has a place to fill and a work to do. If he fails in his duty there will be a vacant place, a flaw in the wall, which will imperil the work.

Stradivarius, the old violin-maker, said that if he did not do his best work he would rob God and leave a blank in God's world instead of good violins. It is true of every one whose hand slacks and who does not do his part, however small, that he leaves a blank where there ought to be something beautiful, some-

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## A Heart Garden

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thing good. If you are not gentle and kind to-morrow, some life will miss the gentleness and kindness, and may sink down beneath its burdens. If you fail to be strong and true in witnessing for Christ to-morrow the Master's cause will suffer at some point. We dare not fail the Master-builder in our place, however small it is.

The other day a very old Christian said: "My work is now done. I cannot be of any use longer to other lives. My strength is all gone." But there is no member of the community who is really a greater blessing than this old man is. The influence of his life is felt everywhere. He takes no part any longer in the activities of church and neighborhood. But he is loved by all. His life has been one of uprightness, honorable dealing, kindness to his neighbors, faithfulness as a Christian, and his ministry goes on though his hand is too feeble now to do life's tasks. No Christian can be so old as to be no longer of any use. A piece of wood was burned. Its usefulness is past now, you might say. But its ashes were

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## As Living Stones

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gathered up and strewn about the root of a plant, and the plant was greener next day.

*"I saw the gardener bring and strew  
Gray ashes where blush roses grew.*

. . . . .  
*Ah, dreary life, whose gladsome spark  
No longer leaps in song and fire,  
But lies in ashes gray and stark,  
Defeated hopes and dead desire,  
Useless and dull and all bereft,—  
Take courage—this one thing is left:  
Some happier life may use thee so  
Some flower bloom fairer on its tree;  
Some sweet or tender thing may grow  
To stronger life because of thee.  
Content to play a humble part,  
Give of the ashes of thy heart,  
And haply God, whose dear decrees  
Taketh from those to give to these,  
Who draws the snowdrop from the snows,  
May from these ashes feed a rose."*

We must not forget that there is not one needless stone in all the building. Every one is necessary to the completeness, the strength,

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## A Heart Garden

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and the security of the wall. And there is not one Christian in all the church of Christ who is foreordained to uselessness, not one who is not needed, not one who cannot honor the Master and bless the world by some service. This is true of the weakest, the youngest. It may be seen at the last that many who think themselves the least and lowliest have done greater and more beautiful and more important work than those who boast of their strength and their power.

There is a beautiful legend of Fra Bernardo. The monastery had vowed to set a carved altar to the Christ at Christmastide. Every monk was to do his own part. All the other monks had finished their work. On Christmas eve Fra Bernardo knelt and told his Lord of his failure. He had tried with his poor skill to carve something for the altar, for Christ's dear sake, but somehow he could not make anything worthy. So he prayed that his fingers might have skill, and that he might be able that very night to carve the dream of beauty that was in his heart. In the morning the

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## As Living Stones

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monks sought Bernardo's cell and found him there—

*“Dead, smiling still, and prostrate as in prayer;  
While at his side a wondrous carving lay—  
A face of Christ sublimely tender, sweet,—  
The work of Fra Bernardo was complete.”*

So it will be with those who seem to fail but who continue striving faithfully, doing their lowly work as well as they can. When the end comes it will be seen that what to them seemed failure was beautiful with the beauty of Christ. God finishes the work that His lowly ones try to do for Him.

The stones that go into a building must be made ready for their place before they are put into the wall. The preparation of these stones begins in the quarry. First there is the blasting which shatters the great solid mass of the rock. Then follows the work of breaking the stones into shape, and cutting, hewing, and polishing them until they are ready to be laid on the wall. Quarry work is hard and painful. If stones had human feelings

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## A Heart Garden

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they would cry out oftentimes as the hammer and chisel do their pitiless work on them. Yet it is in this way that they are fitted to take their place in the great building for which they are designed. In their rough, unhewn state they never could be used, and could lie only as worthless blocks in the quarry. But when they have been cut, dressed, and carved according to the design of the architect, they are lifted to their place and henceforth are honored of all who look upon the noble edifice in which they fill so important a place.

All this is a parable of the way in which these living stones are prepared. God's word is a hammer, and as we read it and allow it to go through us, its convictions, its commands, its corrections, its reproofs and revealings are hammer strokes smiting upon us. Trials, sorrows, and sufferings are the sharp iron tools which God uses in shaping and polishing our lives and fitting us for our place as living stones in the spiritual building. No chastening is joyous for the present, but afterward



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## As Living Stones

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we shall thank God for the sharp cutting which removes the unsightly roughnesses in us and carves lines of beauty. We may not thrust away the hand that smites, for it is preparing us for worthy life and blessedness.

*“When the Lord afflicts thee, think He hews a  
rugged stone  
Which must be shaped, or else aside as useless  
thrown.”*

It is not hard to cut and dress natural stones so as to shape them for their place. They yield readily to the chisel and hammer. But these living stones have wills and can resist. If we would be made ready for our place on the wall we must let Christ have His way with us, however severe and painful His discipline may be.

One of St. Paul's favorite words is edification. To edify is to build up. We are builders. Human lives everywhere are unfinished buildings, and every one who passes by lays a block on the wall or adds an ornament. A

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## A Heart Garden

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hundred people touch you each day, in business contacts, in social fellowships, in friendships, in letters, in transient meetings, and every one of them builds something on the wall of your life, either something that will add to the adornment of your character or something that will mar and hurt it. Every one who comes into our presence, who speaks a word to us, who even reaches us most remotely with his influence, leaves some line of beauty or some mark of marring on our character.

*"Souls are built as temples are,—  
Here a carving rich and quaint,  
There the image of a saint;  
Here a deep-hued pane to tell  
Sacred truth or miracle.  
Every little helps the much;  
Every careful, careless touch  
Adds a charm or leaves a scar."*

In a building, while all rests upon the foundation, each stone becomes in turn a foundation for another stone to rest upon. Course after

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## As Living Stones

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course is laid on the wall until the topmost stones are in their place, and each one must support the block that is laid upon it. Jesus spoke of Peter as a rock, and said that on this rock He would build His Church. It was Peter resting on Christ that Jesus meant. The apostles were the first living stones laid on the great bedrock foundation, and ever since believers on Christ have in turn become rocks on which the Church of Christ is built. To-day Christ says to each one of us as we confess our faith: "Blessed art thou . . . and I also say unto thee that thou art a living stone, and upon this living stone I will build my church." It is a serious thing to know that Christ will build His Church upon us. Other people trust us and follow us, other people lean on us, depend upon us. As one stone in the wall bears other stones that are laid upon it, so must we by our faithfulness, our truth, our firmness, our security, be living stones on which others may build. It is but a little portion that is assigned to each one in God's great building. We should

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## A Heart Garden

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do our little part so beautifully, make it so radiant, so holy, so true, that we shall not be ashamed of it when our work is revealed at last. In Europe, long ago, a cathedral was being built. One day an old man, broken with the weight of years, came and begged to be allowed to do some work on the great building. The master architect did not suppose that the old man could do any important work because of his age and feebleness. But to please him he gave him something to do on the vaulted roof. Day by day the old man wrought there in the shadows. One evening he was missed—did not come down—and the men found him lying beside his finished work—the sculptured face of one whom he had loved long years before. When the building was completed and people came from far and near to admire it, they found this face that was so hidden in the shadows that only once a day, when the sunlight touched it, could it be seen distinctly. But the face was so beautiful that men waited for the sight of it when the light fell upon it, and then said: "This

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## As Living Stones

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is the noblest work in all the cathedral. Love wrought this.”

We are set to do our own little piece on the great temple in which God is to have His habitation. Let us do it well. Our love for Christ should be so great, so strong, so intense that when our task is finished the world will see that we have put the face of the Master on the little stone we have been set to adorn.

*“We are builders, and each one  
Should cut and carve as best he can;  
Every life is but a stone,  
Every one shall hew his own,  
Make or mar, shall every man.”*



## The Christian in the World

*We who are not of the earth need not be earthy;  
God made our nature like His own—divine;  
Nothing of selfishness can be unworthy  
Of this pure image, meant through us to shine.  
The death of deaths it is, ourselves to smother  
In our own pleasuring His honored gift;  
And life—eternal life—to love each other;  
Our souls with Christ in sacrifice to lift.*

*This is the beauty of our new-born morning;  
In Him humanity may now arise  
Out of the grave of self, all baseness scorning;  
The holy radiance of His glorious eyes  
Illumines everywhere uplifted faces;  
Touches the earthly with a heavenly glow;  
And in that blessed light all human graces  
Unto divine beatitudes must grow.*

—LUCY LARCOM.



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## CHAPTER TEN

# The Christian in the World

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ONE of the great problems of Christian life is to get through this world without being harmed by it. Either good people must be so sheltered that the evil of the world cannot reach them, or they must be left amid the evil and kept unspotted from it. Jesus prayed that His disciples should not be taken from the world. He needs them here. A young mother whose husband had died said she would be glad to join him in heaven, but that her babies needed her here.

In some centuries Christ's followers have thought that the best way to live a holy life was to flee from the companionship of men. But one does not get away from temptation in being alone. We carry in our hearts, wherever we go, a great nest of evil things. Be-

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## A Heart Garden

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sides, in fleeing from the world we would be fleeing from duty. Jesus told His disciples that they were to be the salt of the earth. It is the mission of salt to check and prevent the spread of corruption. Every Christian is to make one spot of the world purer, sweeter, a better place to live in. If we hide away from men we are withdrawing the beneficence of our life from the world and leaving our little allotted spot unblessed.

Jesus said also that His disciples were to be the light of the world. He wants us to throw our light where it is dark, that we may be a comfort to others and cheer dreary lives. If we go off into seclusion we leave the places unbrightened which it was ours to fill with light. The Master wants His friends in the midst of the world's evil that they may cleanse it, that amid its sorrows and hungers they may comfort it.

Then we can grow into strength only in the midst of the world's actual experiences. No one in training to be a soldier is kept away from hardness, out of danger, beyond the

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## The Christian in the World

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lines of battle. A mother who would keep her boy in the nursery, away from other boys, so that he may miss the temptations and disciplines of boyhood and have no roughness or hardness to endure, is making a mistake. If the boy is to grow into strong manhood he must meet the experiences which will bring out in him the manly qualities. Not away from the world, but amidst its struggles and strifes is the place where Christ would have His followers grow up. Jesus did not live His own life in quiet nooks or in secluded places, away from people. He was always right among them, and they continually thronged about Him and pressed upon Him with their needs. Then when He came to die He did not go away into some secret place, but died in the midst of throngs.

*“Not on some lonely and lofty hill apart  
Did Christ the Saviour render up His heart  
For man, upon the cross of love and woe;  
But by the common road where to and fro  
The passers went upon their daily ways,  
And, pausing, pierced Him with indifferent gaze.*

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## A Heart Garden

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*And still the crosses of life's highways rise  
Beneath the blinding glare of noonday skies;  
Still with the wrestling spirit's anguished cry  
Blends the light mocking of the passer-by,  
While scorers, gathered at the martyr's feet,  
With railing tongue the olden taunt repeat.  
We may not go apart to give our life  
For men in some supernal, mystic strife.  
Beside the common paths of earth doth love  
Look from its cross to the still heavens above."*

Yet while Christ wishes people to live in the world, He wants them to be kept from the world's evil. St. James gives this definition of religion: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." This is an evil world, but the Christian is expected to pass through it without receiving a stain or blot. He is to engage in the business of the world and yet to conduct all his affairs according to the laws of the heavenly kingdom. He is to mingle with the people of the world and live out the divine law in his

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## The Christian in the World

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own relations and associations with men. Some Christian men have to live and work all the week among those whose lives are unclean, unholy.

It would seem to be impossible for them to keep themselves unspotted in such contacts with evil. Yet that is the problem of Christian living that is set for them. Anybody should find it possible to live purely among those who are pure, and a true, honest, and sober life among those who are true, honest, and sober; but Christ's followers are to live purely, honestly, and soberly among those who disregard all these laws of God. And this is not impossible. A traveller tells of finding a sweet flower growing on the edge of a volcano's crater, and there are lives, gentle, pure, unsullied, white with heaven's whiteness, yet living of necessity in the very midst of this world's vileness, on the very edge of perdition.

Some people try to decide the question of right and wrong in detail. They make one catalogue which they label worldly, and an-

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## A Heart Garden

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other which they call unworldly. Different persons make different lists, according to their training or habit. What one puts on the catalogue of allowable pleasures or amusements another puts under the ban as forbidden. It is interesting to note where the line is drawn and to ask the reason for the distinction. For example, checkers, dominoes, and chess are put by some good people into the catalogue marked unworldly—games a Christian can play—while cards and certain other games are labelled worldly. In some places certain kinds of plays are considered proper, but dancing is regarded as immoral. It is not a great while since, in many Christian homes, a piano must be kept closed on Sunday, but a melodeon or an organ was regarded as unworldly. These are illustrations of some good people's efforts to distinguish between the worldly and the unworldly.

Yet a little thought will show that this method of classification is not satisfactory. One may follow the most approved catalogue of con-

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## The Christian in the World

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ventional morality, doing only the things that are regarded as unworldly, and yet be utterly worldly in heart, in spirit. We cannot decide what is the evil of the world by any such scheme of labels. How, then, can we know what is the evil from which Jesus asked His Father to keep His disciples? Religion is not a matter of catalogues; its essential quality is obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Sermon on the Mount makes it very plain to us, also, that this obedience is not to be in outward form merely, but in spirit, extending to the feelings, motives, and desires.

The consensus of opinion says, for instance, that certain games are unworldly, and therefore proper for Christ's disciples. A little company of Christians sit down together some evening and begin to play "Letters." It is certainly harmless—only the making of the greatest possible number of words out of the letters in the players' hands. The game is labelled innocent, harmless, but have you never seen the players, or one or more of

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## A Heart Garden

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them, get into unseemly strife about some detail as they played—the admissibility of a word, for example, or its spelling? Perhaps an angry quarrel followed, and possibly some of the Christian players sulked the remainder of the evening. The evil of the world in this case was not in the game, but in the unlovely behavior that resulted. Although the game had the sanction of Christian usage, the participants certainly were not kept from the evil of the world.

That which makes an act worldly or unworldly is its spirit, its moral character. One may be engaged even in acts of formal worship, and yet be sinning against God. It is only a mockery to sing hymns and recite prayers if there is in the heart no true praise, no homage corresponding with the profession one makes. The Pharisees made long prayers and professed great devoutness. But Jesus, who saw into men's hearts, said they were hypocrites. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my



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## The Christian in the World

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Father who is in heaven." When Jesus prays that His disciples may be kept from the evil of the world He is asking that while they are in the world, engaged in its work, its evil pressing all about them, the corruption may not touch them.

The problem of Christian living is not to avoid temptation, not to escape enmity, injustice, wrong, but in all our experiences, even when evil surges about us like a flood, to keep our hearts pure, warm, true, and loving. There are some people who are called to endure unkindness and unlovingness perpetually. They cannot change their condition. Even in their own home the atmosphere is unfriendly. Things that tend to embitter them are always present. They are unfairly and unjustly treated. Harsh words are ever falling upon their ears. How can they endure all this wrong, this injustice, this unfairness, and not be harmed by it? The answer is that they are safe and unhurt so long as they keep love in their hearts.

Love was Christ's refuge in all the hatred

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## A Heart Garden

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and bitterness that swept like sea waves about Him. He loved on in spite of all reviling and persecution, all denying and betraying. If He had once lost His patience, or grown resentful, or become provoked, His life would have been stained. It was so in all His temptations. Satan brought his suggestions of evil to the heart and mind of Jesus, but Jesus gave them no hospitality, and they left His soul unharmed. We have the same refuge. We cannot keep the evil from flying about us, whispering in our ears, alighting at our heart's windows, but we can keep it from soiling our souls. When we are wronged by others it is easy to sin by giving way to bitterness, but we can keep ourselves from the evil by keeping ourselves in love, by refusing to be angered, or to allow our hearts to entertain any bitter feeling.

Jesus prayed His Father to keep His disciples from the evil of the world. It is the will of the Father in every case to answer this prayer. He desires us always to be kept from evil. He permits temptations to come to us,

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## The Christian in the World

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for in no other way can we be made strong, but He never means us to yield to them. He intends that we shall resist, and when we resist a temptation it flees and leaves no harm upon us.

Our Father desires always to keep us from evil. Why, then, does He not always do it? Is He sometimes not able to keep us? Are there some assaults of evil that even God cannot withstand? But the other day one was almost bitterly complaining of God because He had allowed a friend to fall into sin, after earnest prayer had been made that He would keep this friend. Why did He let him fall? We must remember that God does not keep us by force from evil. He does not build walls round us to keep us from being assailed. How, then, does God answer this prayer that we shall be kept from the evil of the world?

Physicians tell us that the best safeguard against epidemic and contagion is vigorous vitality. Health is the best antiseptic. If one is perfectly well, full of the energy, the glow,

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## A Heart Garden

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and the force of life, one can go anywhere. The weak are always exposed. A man took typhoid fever recently and died in ten days. The doctors said his vitality was so low when the fever seized him that he could not make the fight. If he had been in prime physical condition he would have got through easily. "If you wish to be insured against the plague, keep up your health." The same is true in spiritual life. If your soul is in splendid health you are safe. The Master said of those who believed on Him: "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them." The devotion of the first disciples was wholehearted, unquestioning, unreserved, and they went amid the greatest dangers unharmed. They walked in the filthiest highways of the worst heathen cities and never got a stain on their garments. There is no other way of being sheltered now, for God will build no castle walls about you; you must be kept from within. A young Christian said that he could not be true to his Master where he was work-

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## The Christian in the World

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ing—the only Christian in the shop, with a score of jeering, mocking companions. He was told to get full of Christ and stay where God had put him, and do the work he had been sent there to do. He did, and God made him His witness. Instead of being swept down by the evil, he mastered it and made his shop a sanctuary.

Our aim should not be, therefore, to seek easy places to live in or to get away from temptation and persecution. We are to stay where God has placed us. The Master needs us right in the heart of the world's evil, that we may change it into good. But we must be full of Christ, or the evil will master us instead of being mastered by us. If we would bless the world we must be separate from the world and full of God, and our lives must be given up to the service of God and our fellow-men.

*“He kept his soul unspotted  
As he went upon his way,  
And he tried to do some service  
For God's people day by day;*

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## A Heart Garden

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*He had time to cheer the doubter  
Who complained that hope was dead;  
He had time to help the cripple  
When the way was rough ahead;  
He had time to guard the orphan; and  
one day, well satisfied  
With the talents God had given him, he  
closed his eyes and died."*

## Witnesses for Christ

*If there be some weaker one,  
Give me strength to help him on;  
If a blinder soul there be,  
Let me guide him nearer Thee;  
Make my mortal dreams come true  
With the work I fain would do;  
Clothe with life the weak intent,  
Let me be the thing I meant;  
Let me find in Thy employ  
Peace that dearer is than joy;  
Out of self to Love be led,  
And in heaven acclimated,  
Until all things sweet and good  
Seem my nature's habitude.*

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *Witnesses for Christ*

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THE followers of Christ are so identified with their Master that everything they do affects His cause. He depends upon them for their help in all His work. On His cross, as He died, Jesus said: "It is finished." His work was done; redemption was complete. But when He returned to His glory He left His disciples on the earth, and their part was to carry the good news to all men. For this they were responsible. This responsibility is ours in the present age. If we have received the news we are, by virtue of this very fact, divinely commissioned to bear it to others. "Let him that heareth say, Come."

George Macdonald tells of a boy who wished he could become a painter that he might help God paint His clouds and sunsets. God needs

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## A Heart Garden

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no help of human hands in painting the splendor of the evening skies, but He does want us to help Him in putting touches of heavenly beauty upon other lives. Consciously or unconsciously we are all the while either helping or hindering Christ in His work. Every day we either honor His name or dishonor it in what we do or in what we do not do.

Before Jesus went away from earth He told His disciples that they should be His witnesses. This referred not only to the words they should speak concerning Him, but to every influence of their lives. Sometimes in a court trial a great deal depends upon what one particular witness may say. Men are brought long distances to testify in certain cases because of the importance of what they know. The other day a witness journeyed all the way from South America to the United States to occupy the witness stand for but five minutes, to answer only two or three questions. Recently several distinguished men travelled a thousand miles to say a few words in court regarding the personal character of

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## Witnesses for Christ

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an accused man and his standing and reputation for integrity in his former home. None of us know how much we owe to the testimony of our neighbors concerning us, the good words they speak of us, the kindly mention they make of the things we do. If false or calumnious things are said of us by an enemy, the testimony of those who know us in our everyday life is our sole refuge. Our reputation is the composite of all the things that people who see much of us and know our daily lives witness concerning us.

We are Christ's witnesses. In His earthly life He had many enemies who sought to injure Him. They made many charges against Him. They accused Him of being an impostor. His disciples were His witnesses. They knew Him intimately. They had lived with Him in closest relations, day after day, month after month. If there had been anything evil in His life, anything untrue or inconsistent, they would have known it. After He had gone they were sent out to testify to His life and character. They were to tell all men what they knew

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## A Heart Garden

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about Him. The world must learn the truth about Jesus, else it would not accept Him as Saviour and Lord. It was very important that His disciples should declare what they knew about Him. On their words Christianity was to be founded. If they spoke doubtingly, if they failed to be faithful in their witnessing, if they withheld any part of the truth which they were to tell, the mission of Christ would fail. They had all the purposes and hopes of redemption in their hands. Christ had done His part, and now had committed all to these men, His witnesses. It was essential that they should prove true witnesses, speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about Him.

Now we are the successors of the first disciples and the witnesses for our own time. The world needs to-day a proclamation of Christ which we only can make. Every generation must have its own witnesses. What was said about Him by His friends nineteen hundred years ago will not be testimony enough for this year. New questions are al-

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## Witnesses for Christ

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ways arising, and each must have its own answer. The friends of Christ to-day must be His present-day witnesses. Past faithfulness was beautiful in its time, but the world must be shown like faithfulness now. There have been heroisms and devotions in every century, splendid testimonies to the faith of Christ's friends in that century, but it will not be enough to point to these when men ask us in this twentieth century for evidences of Christianity which will satisfy them. Christ must have his witnesses among those who now confess His name.

Some of us would like to choose for ourselves our place of witnessing. It is easy to rise among Christian people on a quiet Sunday and say, "I am a Christian, too." But it may be harder to stand up to-morrow among those who do not love Christ and say the same words. A young man finds himself the only Christian in the office where he works. He shrinks from showing his colors there. But he is the only one Christ has in that office. If he should fail to witness for his Master in the

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## A Heart Garden

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presence of the men who are there they will fail to hear about Christ, perhaps will be lost for want of a word, and the blame will be his. Christ knows where He needs us and our service, and we should never fail Him wherever we are.

We do not know the harm we may do any day by our failure to speak the word our Master wants us to speak. We are often warned of the hurt our careless words may give to a gentle heart. We should beware also of careless silences when weary ones need the cheer, the comfort, the kindness we could speak. Many of our worst failures as witnesses for Christ are in not doing the things we ought to have done.

*"I might have said a word of cheer  
Before I let him go.  
His weary vision haunts me yet;  
But how could I foreknow  
That slighted chance would be the last  
To me in mercy given?  
My utmost yearnings cannot send  
That word from earth to heaven.*

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## Witnesses for Christ

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*"I might have looked the love I felt;  
My brother had sore need  
Of that for which—too shy or proud,—  
He lacked the speech to plead.  
But self is near and self is strong,  
And I was blind that day;  
He sought within my careless eyes  
And went, athirst, away.*

*"O word and look and clasp withheld!  
O brother-heart, now stilled!  
Dear life, forever out of reach,  
I might have warmed and filled!  
Talents misused and seasons lost,  
O'er which I mourn in vain—  
A waste as barren to my tears  
As desert sands to rain.'*

A Settlement worker found a young Christian girl in a very unhappy state of mind because she had to work in a mill when she wanted to study and "get up a little." She was a worthy girl, capable of making a good deal of her life. But at present her home needed her help, and it was impossible, therefore, for her to give up her uncongenial work.

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## A Heart Garden

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The friend gave the girl a book which she thought might help her, and left her to work out the problem for herself. The book suggested certain things the girl might do, even in the mill, to make her life splendidly worth while.

“You know,” she said one day, “there is only one of the twelve girls in my room who is a Christian.” “Well,” suggested her friend, “there is your opportunity.” Since then the girl has not only been happy and at peace herself, but she has brought several of the girls to Christ and spoken to others who are interested. She accepted her assignment, became Christ’s witness, and the noisy, uncongenial mill has become a place of glad service.

Witnessing for Christ is not all done in words. Much of the best of it is in life, in disposition, in the way we bear trials, in patient endurance of pain or suffering. We always represent our Master, and in every phase of our experience are His witnesses. It is well to be among His friends in the place of prayer—we confess Him when we gather



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## Witnesses for Christ

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thus with His faithful ones; but we are to confess Him also when we go out among men. Our faces should by their shining show that we have been with God and have been strengthened and blessed.

*“One prayed aloud his thanks, and many heard—*

*But when he passed forth from the house of prayer*

*He wore upon his face his secrets bare,*

*While those who met him sighed, and thought with pain*

*Of all the year had lost them, of the reign*

*Of grief and sorrow on this earth of ours.*

*“One wore upon his face the smile of peace,*

*As if he held communion close with God,*

*And loved the world and all who on it trod;*

*And those who met him smiled, and thought how fair*

*The world must be to him—and straightway there*

*Rose in their hearts a glad thanksgiving hymn!”*

Such witnessing for Christ means oftentimes more than any words one may speak. We do

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## A Heart Garden

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not know how we may cheer and strengthen others by a look of quiet peace on our faces when we go about among people. An unhappy face in a Christian does not tell of victory in life's struggles and does not commend Christ to those one meets. But a face irradiated by an indwelling joy, shining with the light of trust and confidence, is a testimony wherever it is seen to the love and peace and power of Christ.

Confessing Christ in church services is right, but we must continue our witnessing when we go out into the world. This is not always easy. The Rev. J. H. Jowett tells of a man who attended a meeting and said, a few days afterward: "I was never so blessed and lifted up in soul in my life as I was that hour. It was like being in heaven. But," he went on, "unfortunately, I had to be at work at six o'clock next morning, and before eight I was wondering what the preacher of last night would say about living a Christian life if he had to be in our factory as I have to be." It may not be easy to go on Monday morning, after

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## Witnesses for Christ

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a quiet, spiritual Sunday, into a mill or store, or into the busy mart, to meet with all sorts and conditions of men, and continue our faithfulness and the fervor and rapture of our devotion. But, nevertheless, we are to be Christ's witnesses in our Monday places of work as truly as in our Sunday places of worship. When the power of the Holy Spirit is in us, the noise of a factory, the rush of business, or the cares of a mother's life in her home will not break the spirit and sweetness of the life we are living for our Lord. Any one can be devout at the communion or in a meeting for prayer, where there is nothing to distract or annoy him, nothing to excite or trouble him. The real problem, however, is to carry the peace of God and the spirit of Christ out into the fret, worry, and noise of the week days. But this is not impossible. The presence of Christ is as really with us on the weekdays when we are at our common tasks as it is on Sundays when we are at our devotions.

True, we cannot make heaven yet for our-

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## A Heart Garden

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selves in this life of struggle and care. At the best we shall have our failures, our defeats, our stumblings, will make mistakes, and will not reach our high ideal. But here is the test: Do we go on fighting, striving, undiscouraged in our hard days here, just as determined to reach our ideal after a day of failure as we were when we set out in the morning? Charles Kingsley presents well the human side of the Christian life in these words: "Oh, at least be able to say in that day: 'Lord, I am no hero. I have been careless, cowardly, sometimes all but mutinous. Punishment I have deserved, I deny it not. But a traitor I have never been. I have tried to fight on thy side in thy battle against evil. I have tried to do the duty which lay nearest to me; and to leave whatever thou didst commit to my charge a little better than I found it. I have not been good, but I have at least tried to be good.'"

This every young Christian should be able to say. He cannot say less and be loyal to his Master. Yet he cannot say more while he is

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## Witnesses for Christ

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still in this world, beset with infirmities. He will live no day perfectly, yet he will never give up striving to become perfect.

Every morning the Master says to us anew, "You shall be My witnesses to-day." A hundred times before nightfall we shall have our opportunities to witness. The opportunities will come to men in their business. They must be honest, they must think of the man with whom they are dealing. If they deceive him in a bargain, if they tell him a falsehood, if they drive a sharp trade, they may chuckle over their shrewdness, but they cannot look Christ in the face in the evening and be at peace. The opportunity comes to the women in their home life and social life. They must be patient, sweet, unfretted amid the irritations, provocations, annoyances, and trials of household care, in contacts with neighbors, in disagreeable situations, in perplexing social experiences. "What do ye more than others?" suggests the standard of Christian life. You are to be a little more patient, kind, thoughtful, sweet, than the women who are

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## A Heart Garden

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not Christians. You are to do things which nobody but a Christian would do, and do them in a way that only a Christian would do them.

We represent Christ wherever we go. He is not here to-day in human form, but He sends us in his place. We are to act for Him, speak the words of kindness He would speak if He were here, do the deed of love He would do if He were in our place. We must be faithful to our mission. We must never be silent when we ought to speak. We must never speak when we ought to be silent.

Guarded from Stumbling

*“Our feet from falling?—yes; our eyes from tears?  
We do not know!  
Not always richest in the sunniest years  
Our harvests grow.*

*“Our hearts are stony, like our native soil—  
The tears of pain,  
Wrung from our eyes by bitter grief and toil,  
The softening rain.*

*“Yet pray we still, Lord, though Thou bidst us weep;  
Thy sun appears  
Breaking through clouds of sorrow, thou wilt keep  
Our eyes from tears.”*



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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Guarded from Stumbling

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THE promise of heaven is very alluring to Christian hope. But how can we get there? Perils seen and unseen beset the way, and we have no strength to defend ourselves or to keep our lives from hurt. To meet these dangers, however, we have the promise of a Guide who is able to guard us on all the way from falling, even from stumbling, and to bring us at last unharmed, without blemish, to the door of our Father's house.

The Bible gives many assurances of protection to the children of God as they pass through this world. They dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. They take refuge under the wings of God. The angels of God have special charge over them to keep them

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## A Heart Garden

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in all their ways. A mother, after a sore bereavement which changed all her life, was grieving at having to leave the old home where everything had grown sacred. Tears filled her eyes as she took the last look at the familiar scenes—house, grounds, trees, and hills. Her little boy tried to comfort her, and as he looked out of the window of the car, he said: “Why, mother, God’s sky is over us yet. It’s going right along with us.” We never can get beyond the blue of the heavens; we never can get out from under the shadow of the Almighty. Wherever we may have to go we shall always have the love of God over us.

There are also promises of protection. We have the assurance that God will not suffer our foot to be moved. So the divine thought extends even to our feet and to our steps, one by one. There is not an inch in all our pathway through this world that is unwatched, on which the eye of God does not rest. The most watchful human love must sometimes close its eyes in sleep. The most loving mother

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## Guarded from Stumbling

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must sometimes steal from the bedside of her little sick child for a minute's rest. But the divine care never slumbers nor fails, even for a moment. "He that keepeth thee will not slumber." There is a strange sense of security in knowing that some one is watching when we cannot watch. On shipboard, when the passengers are in their berths, it cheers them to hear the call from the lookout, hour after hour, telling them that all is well. We go to our beds at night in our city homes with a quieter trust because the watchman is on his beat outside. In camp, in the enemy's country, in times of war, officers and men sleep, though there is constant danger of assault, because all night long the sentinels wake and guard the lines. In this world of danger we need never vex ourselves with fear or anxiety, for God is watching, and He never sleeps. There is not a moment by day or by night when we are unguarded. There can be no sudden surprise or danger by which God can be taken unaware.

Physical protection is not all we need. There

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## A Heart Garden

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are those who have every comfort and luxury, a happy home, loving friends and all that is needed to give them freedom from care, and yet they are beset all the while with other dangers of which they do not dream. The worst perils are not those that threaten our bodies. We dread accidents which might wound us or break our limbs. We dread contagion which smite us low in sickness. We dread robbers who might carry off our treasures. But these are not the worst dangers, and being guarded from these is not the truest keeping. Sometimes robbers come in the darkness and take away money or silver or jewels from a home. But that is not the worst robbing. We may lose all our treasures and yet be rich.

*“O the night was dark and the night was late,  
And the robbers came to rob him;  
And they picked the locks of the palace-gate,  
The robbers that came to rob him—  
They picked the locks of his palace-gate,  
Seized his jewels and gems of state,  
His coffers of gold and his priceless plate,—  
The robbers that came to rob him.*

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## Guarded from Stumbling

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*“But loud laughed he in the morning red,  
For of what had the robbers robbed him?  
Ho! hidden safe as he slept in bed,  
When the robbers came to rob him,  
They robbed him not of a golden shred  
Of the childish dreams in his wise old head—  
‘And they’re welcome to all things else,’ he said,  
When the robbers came to rob him.”*

There are robbers which pick no lock and take not a dollar of treasure, yet which rob lives of possessions more precious than money or gems. We need a guardianship more watchful than that of any man. When Jesus was going away He commended His disciples to His Father’s care. He did not ask that they should be kept from suffering, from persecution, from sword or stake or dungeon—what He asked was that while in the world they should be kept from the world’s evil. There is no other real peril; if we are kept from sin, nothing else can really harm us. The keeping of our bodies and of our home is part of the divine care. But we need also spiritual keeping, and this, too, we have in the divine

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## A Heart Garden

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guardianship. "The Lord will keep thee from all evil." There is really but one "evil." It is not sickness, it is not loss of money, it is not pain, it is not sorrow. One may suffer in all these ways and not be touched by evil at any point. It is protection from evil that we need most of all, and this we have in God. When we are enjoying the greatest prosperity we are sometimes in the greatest danger. "When you see me begin to get rich, pray for my soul," said a good man to his friend. The keeping that we need most is from spiritual perils, and this we have in God.

The refuge against spiritual dangers is not built of stones. One may be in a castle, safe from all earthly assault, and yet be in the midst of enemies. God Himself is the refuge of His people. One of the great promises of the Old Testament is: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." God's is the keeping. God's omnipotence is the wall of the refuge. God's love and care are the warmth and comfort of the dwelling-place. But how may we be admitted to

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## Guarded from Stumbling

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this shelter? The promise of keeping is for him whose mind is stayed on God. That is our part—the staying of our heart and mind upon God. That means trust. One who had just had a wonderful proof of the divine thought and care in opening a way said: “I wish I could learn to trust when I begin to be in need. I had a hundred evidences the last year that God is caring for me. But every time I begin to need help I get afraid again, as if I had never known of God’s protection.” We should trust God without question, without seeing help in sight. That is what “stayed on God” means—quiet confidence and implicit obedience. Then comes peace, perfect peace.

A New-Testament assurance of divine keeping runs thus: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” Christ does not think of us in flocks, but as individuals, one by one, as our mothers do. In a collection of relics picked

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## A Heart Garden

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up on the field of Waterloo is a ring, set with a large pearl, and on the pearl the miniature of a beautiful girl's face. The ring was worn by some soldier in the battle, and we can think how his eyes lingered on the portrait and how it inspired him with courage as he entered the battle. Thus the Master carries our faces on a pearl of love. In all our perils, struggles, and sorrows He has us in His heart. "I know them . . . They shall never perish . . . No one shall snatch them out of My hand."

Another word tells us that our life is "hid with Christ in God." Love always makes a holy shelter for those it keeps in its heart. Think how the mother by her love weaves a wall of safety about her child. Think how a friend throws about his friend an invisible protection. So does the love of Christ surround the trusting life with an invisible protection which nothing can tear away. A Christian woman, having to cross the river late at night, was approached by a stranger. As the boat was landing he said: "I see you are alone." "No, sir, I am not alone; I have



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## Guarded from Stumbling

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a friend." "I do not see any one," he said, looking round. The woman quietly answered, "Jesus Christ is with me," and the man turned and fled into the darkness.

*"Like moss around the budding rose,  
Like snow around the lily's gold,  
So would my love enclose,  
With tenderness untold,  
My thought of thee  
All silently.*

*"Like breezes through the old oak grove,  
Like sunshine o'er the landscape fair,  
So would my true life rove,  
In active love and prayer,  
At God's sweet will,  
Singing or still."*

There is another word of Christ's which brings strong assurance of safety in time of danger. "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Does God care for sparrows?

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## A Heart Garden

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*"So many sparrows sit in the tree,  
So many birdies hide in their nests,  
So many hearts are full of glee,  
And so much sorrow hides in their breasts.  
The day is too warm, or the day is too cold,  
So many young the little nests hold;  
So many boys are laying their snare;  
Does God care?*

. . . . .

*"The dear Lord knows and the dear Lord sees  
The bird in the tree and the bird in the nest;  
He hears their joyous melodies,  
He tempers the wind, be it east or west;  
He seeth their danger; he seeth their care,  
Up on the wing, and down in the snare;  
When the cold rain beats, and the cold wind  
blows.*

*Yes, God knows."*

If a little sparrow is cared for by God and is not forgotten, will He care less for one of His children? Not less, but immeasurably more. Then there is the Master's familiar word about the numbering of our hairs, which is very suggestive. God does not count people's hairs—that is not what the word means.

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## Guarded from Stumbling

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It means that He takes note of the smallest things in our lives, the smallest events, the smallest cares, the least dangers. Our God is great, but He knows our names and loves us individually, the least as tenderly as the greatest. His guardianship extends also to all our life, to the most insignificant circumstances and experiences.

Then we are told also that our Lord is able to guard us from stumbling. This is a great promise. We are too lenient with ourselves and too charitable toward our own failures and falls. We set too low a standard for our own lives. We say, "No one can live perfectly," and then we hide under that confession of weakness every time we come short. Yet He is able to keep us even from stumbling. In the *Te Deum* is the petition, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin." This should be the Christian's prayer every morning. Though we may not reach the lofty ideal, this aspiration should never die out of our hearts. Our aim should be to live each day without sin. We do not

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## A Heart Garden

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need to yield to temptation. The mighty One is ever by us, and our power to endure is not measured by our own frail strength. He, strong Son of God, who is ever with us, is able to guard us even from stumbling.

God does not intend to keep us from being tempted. We must all meet temptation. An untempted life is weak and insecure. But in permitting us to be tempted God does not mean that we shall fall into sin. Temptation is not sin. When God lets us be tempted it is that we may overcome and grow stronger. Browning puts it in this strong and true way:

*Why comes temptation, but for man to meet  
And master and make crouch beneath his feet?*

So while heaven seems far off, and while the way is full of enemies and dangers, yet none, not even the weakest, need perish on the way, nor fail to get home. Christ the mighty One has built a road through the world, a safe and secure road, on which all His friends may journey under His guidance and guardian-

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## Guarded from Stumbling

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ship without danger and without hurt till they enter the Father's house.

*"O, what is this pathway white, with parapets  
of light,  
Whose slender links go up, go up, and meet in  
heaven high?  
'Tis the Road of the Loving Heart from earth  
to sky.*

*"Who made the beautiful road? It was the Son  
of God,  
Of Mary born in Bethlehem. He planned it  
first and then  
Up the Road of the Loving Heart He led all  
men.*

*"Was it not hard to build? Yes, all His years  
were filled  
With labor, but He counted not the cost nor was  
afraid:—  
No Road of the Loving Heart is cheaply made."*



## The Bible in Life

*“Only a seed—but it chanced to fall  
In a little cleft of a city wall;  
And taking root grew bravely up  
Till a tiny blossom crowned its top.*

*“Only a thought—but the work it wrought  
Could never by tongue or pen be taught;  
For it ran through a life like a thread of gold,  
And the life bore fruit an hundred-fold.*

*“Only a word—but ’twas spoken in love,  
With a whispered prayer to the Lord above,  
And the angels in heaven rejoiced once more,  
For a newborn soul ‘entered in by the door.’”*



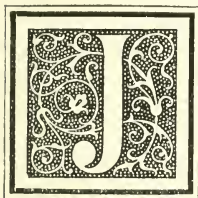
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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### The Bible in Life

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JUST how to use the Bible so as to get from it the help it has to give, perplexes many good people. Some have an almost superstitious regard for the book. They think it will ward off dangers and bring blessings. Many a soldier, as he enters a battle, throws away his pack of cards and puts a New Testament in his pocket and then feels safer. Some people suppose the Bible will answer their questions and mark out their duty for them in a mechanical, though an infallible, way. So when they have some serious problem which they cannot solve they open the book at random and put their finger on a verse with their eyes closed, and take that verse as containing an inspired direction. But in no such way does the Bible offer to help us. It is not a fetich.

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## A Heart Garden

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It is meant to be a book of life to us, but it must be used intelligently. It helps us from within, not from without. In one place we are exhorted to let the word of Christ dwell in us. The word of Christ consists primarily of all the very sayings of Christ which are preserved for us in the Gospels. There are not many of these—we can read them all in a little while. But they are the most wonderful words ever spoken. Then in a wider sense the word of Christ includes all divine revelations. The Bible is a marvellous book. It contains lofty, spiritual teachings which are meant to change earth's wilderness into a heavenly garden.

The word of Christ does its work from within. Hence it must get into our heart and we must let it dwell in us. We can shut it out if we will. It cannot enter into our life unless we let it enter, nor will it stay with us unless it is hospitably entertained. It will not do anything for us either if we keep it out. A Bible lying on our table will not make known to us any of the wonderful revealings it con-

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## The Bible in Life

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tains—we must receive its words into our heart.

A great deal of advice has been given in books and sermons concerning the best way to study the Bible. The fact is, however, that not many people do study it. Many read books about the Bible, but not all of these read the Bible itself. Many know a few bright and great verses, but know nothing about the book as a whole. They find a little garden spot here and there and visit it now and then, breathing the fragrance of the flowers and eating the fruits they find there, while the vast continent of the Scriptures lies unexplored beyond. If we read any other book as most people read the Bible we should never know much of literature. The Bible should be studied intelligently. It should be studied thoroughly, for every portion of it is profitable for instruction, for correction, for comfort, for help.

If the word of Christ is allowed to dwell in us richly, what will be its effect on our everyday life? For one thing, it will transform our

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## A Heart Garden

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character. The word of God is a lamp. Wherever it shines it reveals the flecks, the flaws, the blemishes, the wrong things in hearts and lives. It shows us our selfishness, our envy, our jealousy, our lack of love, our doubts, our inconsistencies. Ruskin tells us we should count ourselves happy the day we discover a new fault in our life or character—not happy because the fault is there, but because we have discovered it, that we may rid ourselves of it. Where the word of Christ dwells it reveals faults and cleanses.

But cleansing is not enough. It is not enough not to do sinful things. Religion is not made up of negatives and “thou shalt nots.” Jesus says that His words are spirit and life. They are like seeds, seeds gathered from heavenly gardens and brought to earth. When planted in human hearts things of heaven will grow there. In Derbyshire, England, there are said to be some flowers which are not found in the English flora. The story is that in the far-away days of the Crusades a knight from Derbyshire went, with others, to the rescue of

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## The Bible in Life

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the Holy Sepulcher. When he came back, after years filled with brave deeds, this crusader brought home with him seeds of Oriental flowers, which he planted on his estates. They grew there, and now, centuries afterward, they are still growing. The words of Christ are seeds brought from heaven. They were planted in this world and are now growing all over the lands where the gospel has gone. Every true Christian life is a little garden where love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and other spiritual things are growing.

The word of Christ is to be a guest in our heart. Where His word is thus welcomed and permitted to dwell, Christ Himself is guest. There is a story of a gentle and loving child who found her way into a loveless and prayerless home and stayed there, changing everything by the sweet, gracious influence of her life, until the home became a place of love and prayer. Wherever Christ is Guest all life is brightened, dull task-work is made like angel-ministry, friendships are sweetened,

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## A Heart Garden

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burdens are lightened, and commonplace circumstances are transfigured. One writes of such an experience:

*“Homely work is mine to-day—  
Floors to sweep, and fires to lay,  
Plates to wash, and clothes to mend,  
Work which never seems to end;  
Yet I pray,  
Jesus be my guest to-day.*

*“Not as one to dwell apart  
In the spare-room of my heart,  
But as one to whom my prayer  
May confide the smallest care.  
Thus I pray,  
Lord, be thou my guest to-day.*

*“He reproves me if I fret  
Over work unfinished yet;  
Checks me if I make a task  
Of some work He does not ask.  
My dear Guest  
Wishes me to work and rest.*

*“At the closing of the day,  
When once more my heart shall say*

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## The Bible in Life

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*In this busy life of mine—  
'All the glory, Lord, is Thine.'  
Christ, I pray,  
Be the guest of every day.'*

The reason we have so little of Christ in our lives, and are so little like Him, is because we have so little of Christ's word dwelling in us. The housekeeper makes the home. She puts her own taste, good or ill, the beauty or the unbeauty of her own spirit, the gentleness or the ungentleness of her own heart, into her housekeeping and her homemaking. You know the woman by the home she makes. If the word of Christ lives in us it will be housekeeper in our hearts; and it will make the life like itself. If it is guest in us, it will be homemaker too.

Every influence of the word of Christ is toward beauty and joy. Some homes have always a sombre air. Some people's religion seems to make them severe and ungentle. But that is not the Christly way. The religion which the word of Christ inspires is sunny and songful. Some one writes: "We want a

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## A Heart Garden

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religion that softens the step, turns the voice to melody, fills the eye with sunshine, and checks the impatient exclamation and harsh rebuke; a religion that is polite to all, deferential to superiors, considerate to friends; a religion that goes into the family and keeps the husband from being cross when dinner is late; that keeps the wife from fretting when the husband tracks the newly washed floor with his soiled boots, and makes the husband mindful of the scraper and the door mat; that keeps the mother patient when the baby is cross, and amuses the children as well as instructs them; that projects the honeymoon into the harvest moon, and makes the happy home like the Eastern fig-tree, bearing on its bosom at once the tender blossom and the glory of the ripening fruit."

If the word of Christ dwells in us it will make us helpers of others. It will so saturate and sweeten our thoughts, our dispositions, our tempers, and our feelings that the love of Christ will flow out in all our common speech. It will make our words gracious and kind. It



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## The Bible in Life

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will keep us from all bitter, censorious, acrid, and hasty speech. It will inspire in us all helpful words. In no department of life do we more need to be divinely taught than in the use of our tongues. Many people seem never to learn the fine art of Christian speech. Even in their efforts to do good, they speak unadvisedly, hurting when they want to help, making wounds of grief bleed afresh when they wish to give comfort. We need to pray continually for the tongue of them that are taught, that we may know how to sustain with words him that is weary.

The possibilities of helpfulness in speech are almost infinite. One who has a consecrated tongue, a tongue thoroughly imbued with love, and completely under the sway of grace, can be the inspirer of all that is good and beautiful in others, a comforter of sorrow, an encourager of those who are disheartened, a guide to inexperience, and in a thousand ways a helper of fellow-pilgrims. We should think much of the ministry of our own speech. If only we learn how to use for Christ the mar-

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## A Heart Garden

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vellous power we have in our tongues, there is no danger that our lives will not be worth while.

Another of the results of the indwelling of the word of Christ is a joyful life. The word of Christ puts psalms and hymns and spiritual songs into our lips. 'Good cheer is a Christian duty. We do not begin to realize the need of joy in those who bear Christ's name. In no other way can they truly and fitly witness for the Master. A Christian should never be discouraged, should never doubt the outcome of good from all that seems evil. A wailing, complaining, fearing Christian is failing his Lord.

In countless ways does the word of Christ in the heart reveal itself in the life. It assures us of comfort in sorrow, of strength in weakness. It makes shining faces; it keeps songs always singing. It makes men patriotic, and women patient and kind. It blesses homes; it enriches and beautifies lives.

## The Making of a Home

*Lighten the morning, fill the day  
With visions from the infinite;  
Throw hope across the saddened way,  
Change the soiled robes for garments white,  
And let us see through winsome grace  
An angel in the commonplace.*

*Let us exalt all common things  
To high endeavor and great aims  
And see the glint of angel wings  
Shining across familiar names,  
And understand that it is given  
To earth to be the door of heaven.*

*Oh, homely faces of dear friends,  
And household pictures in the fires,  
And humble duties with wise ends,  
And faithful loves and pure desires!  
Could we not better lose than these  
All unfamiliar joys that please?*

—MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### The Making of a Home

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O work any man can do for Christ is more important than what he can do and should do in his own home. No measure of faithfulness in public

Christian duties will excuse fathers and mothers for the neglect of the spiritual care and culture of their own households. Perhaps, too, there is no part of Christian duty that is more apt to be neglected in these days than that which we owe to our homes. On the one hand the business life and club life of many men make them almost ciphers of influence in their own families, especially in the line of religious influence. On the other hand, the social life and other outside engagements of many women so fill their hands that they find little time for the beautiful and gentle service they might render in their own homes.

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## A Heart Garden

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A great picture was being exhibited for the first time in the artist's studio. It was rich and beautiful. But those who were present that day saw that it lacked something. It seemed all mist and cloud—hazy, incomprehensible. The artist himself, as he looked at the picture, noticed the lack. Taking his brush, he put a touch of red on the canvas, and that changed everything. Some homes seem to have in them everything they need to make them perfect. They have all the equipments and conveniences that modern taste and skill can provide. Health and happiness, the gladness of hospitality and the pleasures of refined social life yield their portion to the comfort of these homes. Yet something is wanting to make them perfect. It is the red of Christ's love; it is the benediction of Christ's gentleness. If Christ were guest, the joy and sweetness would be immeasurably increased. We need to think very seriously of these matters, for if the Christian home goes, is lost, given up, the loss will be irreparable.

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## The Making of a Home

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It is not a shrinking from their share of the responsibility for men to say that the making of the home is primarily woman's work. Men have their part — a serious and important part. They should provide the home and maintain it. They should bring to it noble and worthy life, joy, cheer, happiness, the very best they have to bring. A man calls himself the head of the family. The head should give honor to the house. A man should so live in private and in public that his wife and children shall be proud of him. The man should be the family priest, and should be holy, true, and right with God. There are many things that the man can do in and for his home. But there are things that a wife can do better than her husband. Her hands are gentler, her heart is kindlier, and she has skill for the doing of many things that he cannot do.

The mother is the real home-maker. It is her sweet life that gives the home its atmosphere. It is through her love that God comes first to her little children. The rabbis used

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## A Heart Garden

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to say: "God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers." The thought is very beautiful. Mother-love is God's love revealed in an incarnation which comes so close to the life of infancy that it wraps it about in divine tenderness, and broods over it in divine yearning. Father Tabb's lines are true:

*The baby has no skies  
But mother's eyes,  
Nor any God above  
But mother's love.  
His angel sees the Father's face,  
But he the mother's, full of grace.*

No mother needs to be taught to love her children, but a suggestion may be needed about the aim and direction of this wonderful love. Some good mothers live for their children most devotedly, but think only or chiefly of earthly things. They watch over them tenderly in sickness. They toil and deny themselves to have their children clothed in a fitting way. They begin very early to teach them little lessons, and cease not to train their



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## The Making of a Home

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minds to fit them to shine in the world. But they do not give such thought to their children's spiritual education. They do not teach them the will of God. They do not fulfil the ancient exhortation to talk with their children of the divine law when sitting in their homes and when walking by the way, when they come in and when they go out. There are homes in which children grow up without ever hearing a prayer from their fathers or mothers, or receiving any instruction whatever concerning spiritual matters.

On the other hand, there are homes where the fires always burn brightly on the altar, where loving words are spoken continually for Christ, where children are taught in their earliest years that God loves them, and where they learn to pray with their first lisplings. A good man tells of what happened in his own childhood home over and over again. As he lay quietly at night in his little room, before sleep came on there would be a gentle footstep on the stairs, the door would open noiselessly, and in a moment the well-known

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## A Heart Garden

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form, softly gliding through the darkness, would appear at his bedside. First, there would be a few gentle inquiries of affection, gradually deepening into words of counsel. Then, kneeling, her head touching his, the mother would begin in gentle words to pray for her boy, pouring forth her whole soul in desires and supplications. Mothers know how her pleadings would run, and how the tears would mingle with the words. "I seem to feel them yet," he writes in advanced years, "where sometimes they fell on my face. Rising, then, with a good-night kiss, she was gone. The prayers often passed out of thought in slumber, and came not to mind again for years, but they were not lost. They were safely kept in some sacred place of memory, for they reappear now with a beauty brighter than ever. I willingly believe that they were an invisible bond with heaven, that secretly preserved me while I moved carelessly amid numberless temptations and walked the brink of crime."

Any mother will find it well worth while to

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## The Making of a Home

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weave such chains of gold about her child, in its tender years, to bind it fast round God's throne. It is well worth her while to fill her children's earliest life with such sacred memories as these, which will never fade out of their hearts. Far down into the years the memory of these holy moments will abide, proving a light in darkness, an inspiration in discouragement, a secret of victory in hard struggle, an angel of God to keep from sin in fierce temptation. Some one writes of a mother's prayers:

*“ When mother prayed, then all the air  
Grew tremulous with music rare;  
Love's earnest pleading for its own  
Was wafted heavenward to the throne.  
' God bless my children,' thus the prayer;*

*“ ‘ Keep them unspotted everywhere,  
O Father, God!’ In softest tone  
Echoed the whisper, upward blown,  
When mother prayed.*

*“ Oh, dread the day when mother's prayer  
Breathes out no more her heart's fond care;*

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## A Heart Garden

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*For blessings rich from heavenly zone  
Came angel-like from heights far blown,  
When mother prayed."*

Atmosphere is important—is the vital thing. We do not begin to realize how much the atmosphere of a home has to do with the making of the character of the children who grow up there. There might be a great deal of religion in the family life, so far as talk and even formal prayer are concerned, religion in its forms and ceremonials, and yet be an utter absence of the spirit of Christ—love, truth, justice, right. There are homes where selfishness rules—the daily home life is a constant scramble for the best. There are homes where worldliness reigns—love of pleasure, amusement, gayety, with no vision of heaven, with no thought of God. There are homes where love is wanting—no gentleness, no thoughtfulness, no considerateness, no patience, no unselfish serving of each other in the daily life. Then there are homes where Christ's presence can almost be felt in the sweet atmosphere, where love is in every

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## The Making of a Home

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hour's life, where sincerity and truth appear in every act, where there is no sordidness, where no impatient, unkind, uncharitable, or censorious word is ever heard, where each finds always the best in others, where every one is an encourager and none ever a discourager.

We do not realize what the daily life of the home means in the future of the children. Example is most important. One said to a minister: "The memory of my father is a sacred influence to me; yet I can remember the day when I was hungry because of my father's conduct. I can remember my mother crying as she cut the last loaf, keeping none for herself, and gave us what there was." The father had been turned away from his business for refusing to do a mean and shabby thing. They gave him three days to think it over, and then he came home with no prospects and no money. The mother said to her children, "It breaks my heart to see you hungry, but I will tell you what kind of a man your father is," and she told them.

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## A Heart Garden

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The son, far on in his years, testified: "Many a time have I been tempted to do wrong, and then there arose before me the figure of the man who dared even to see his children suffer before he would sully his own conscience and sin against God." And this recollection restrained him and kept him true. It is a great thing for a boy to have such memories of his father as that.

That is the kind of religion Christ would have us live in our homes. What others do does not make the ideal for us. No matter what goes on in other homes close to ours where we visit, and whose inmates visit us, we must live right within our own doors. If we are sordid, selfish, and bitter in our spirit, if we are mean, truckling, or dishonest, we cannot expect our children to be any better than we are. The very first place for us to practise truth, honesty, right, and love is at home, the holiest place in the world, the very presence of the Lord to us. If we are untrue and unloving at home, there is little use in our professing saintliness outside.

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## The Making of a Home

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But parents are not the only members of a household who have to do with the making of the home. Children have their share of the responsibility. Said Charles Lamb: "What would I not give to call my dear mother back to earth for a single day, to ask her pardon, upon my knees, for all those acts by which I grieved her gentle spirit!" Many persons carry a like feeling of regret through all the years. By far the keenest element of a child's grief beside a parent's coffin is the remorse caused by the memory of unkindness done along the days. Sometimes it is thought to make atonement for wrongs committed, for hurts caused to a gentle heart, by bringing flowers to the coffin. But the place for a child to scatter flowers is along the parent's hard paths of toil and care. The love of parents for their children should be repaid with gratitude and by love's ministry all the days down to life's very end.

How happy is the home where all, parents and children, not one missing, are together in the family of God! Very sweet is the joy

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## A Heart Garden

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of fellowship in a home like this. Such a home is a foretaste of heaven. There never can be any real separation in it. One may be taken, but the home is not broken. Dr. Peabody writes of a father's dedication of his child to God:

*My darling boy, so early snatched away  
From arms still seeking thee in empty air;  
That thou shouldst come to me, I do not pray,  
Lest by thy coming heaven should be less fair.*

*Stay, rather, in perennial flower of youth,  
Such as the Master, looking on, must love  
And send to me the spirit of the truth  
To teach me of the wisdom of above.*

*Beckon to guide my thoughts, as stumblingly  
They seek the kingdom of the undefiled;  
And meet me at its gateway with thy key—  
The unstained spirit of a little child.*

A father and his son were shipwrecked. They clung to the rigging for a time, and then the son was washed off. In the morning the father was rescued in an unconscious state, and after



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## The Making of a Home

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many hours awoke in a fisherman's hut, lying on a soft, warm bed. He turned his face, and there lay his son beside him on the same bed.

So one by one our households are swept away in the sea of death. Our homes are emptied and our fondest ties are broken. But if we are all united in Christ, we shall awake in the other world to see beside us again our loved ones whom we have lost awhile, but who have only gone on before us into the eternal home.



## Guarding Our Trust

*May I reach that purest heaven, be to other souls  
The cup of strength in some great agony,  
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,  
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty;  
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,  
And in diffusion ever more intense;  
So shall I join the choir invisible  
Whose music is the gladness of the world.*

—GEORGE ELIOT.

*“We cannot change yesterday—that is clear,  
Or begin on to-morrow until it is here;  
So all that is left for you and for me  
Is to make to-day as sweet as can be.”*

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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### Guarding Our Trust

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HERE is a serious responsibility in living. Christ commits something to us, something of His to each one of us, which we are set to guard, to keep, to use, to bring to its best, and at last to restore to Him, unharmed, unwasted. Jesus could say to His Father, as He came to the end of His life, referring to the lives entrusted to Him, "I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition." When we come home at the close of our life we should be able to say to our Master: "All that Thou gavest me I have guarded, and nothing has been lost out of my hands through any fault, neglect, or failure of mine."

St. Paul charged Timothy to guard "that good thing" which was committed unto him, referring to the interests of the gospel. Tim-

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## A Heart Garden

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othy was a young man. Young manhood was his, to guard and keep, and no trust could be more sacred. It is said of the little creature, the ermine, that it will die rather than let any pollution touch its white fur. This fur is used for lining or facing certain official garments—for example, the robes of judges. The word ermine is used, therefore, of the judge's office in token of the perfect rectitude and incorruptibleness which should distinguish the man who occupies the position. We say the judge must keep his ermine unspotted. So it should be with every Christian young man. He wears God's ermine. This is a world of evil, but he must keep his garments white, his life pure and clean, as he passes through it. He must be willing to suffer, to make any sacrifice in guarding the whiteness and purity of his life. The trouble with too many of us is that we are not willing to fight in guarding the sacred trust committed to us. We yield too easily to the tempter; we fall in too readily with the world in its way.

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## Guarding Our Trust

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*"If thou, my Christ, to-day  
Should'st speak to me and say  
'What battles hast thou fought for Me?  
Show me thy scars; I fain would see  
Love's depth of victory:'*

*"If thou should'st speak, my Christ,  
My Leader and my King,  
And bid me lay my wounds in sight,  
The scars borne just for Thee in fight,  
What love-scars could I bring?"*

To every one some good thing is committed by the Master, something of His that we must carry through this world, safely guarding it all the way, and present it to Him at last. Is any trust more sacred than that which is committed to a mother when a baby is laid in her arms? It is God's child, not the mother's alone. She is to guard it for God.

*"Mother, father, watch the little feet  
Climbing o'er the garden wall,  
Bounding through the busy streets,  
Ranging cellar, shed, and hall;*

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## A Heart Garden

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*Never count the moments lost,  
Never mind the time it costs;  
Little feet will go astray—  
Mother, father, watch them while you  
may.”*

Every new friend who comes into our life is a trust committed to us. We usually think of our friendships as privileges which bring us joy and benefit. But the truest thought of friendship is that it gives us the opportunity of serving, of helping, of guarding another. It is a holy moment when we receive a new friend. It is another life committed to us, that we may be a blessing to it, that we may add to its beauty, that we may be shelter and protection to it. A good family name is also something committed to us. If a father has won honor for himself by a noble and worthy life, by a ministry of kindness and good deeds, he bequeaths his name to his children as a heritage—something committed to them which they are to guard from stain. As Christians, too, we have the holy name of Christ entrusted to us. Wherever we go we bear it,



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## Guarding Our Trust

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and must sacredly guard it. If we do anything unworthy, we dishonor that name. The responsibility of being a Christian is a very serious one.

We are to guard that which is committed unto us. It is not ours to do with as we please. A man was cruelly beating his child. When some one interfered the man said: "It's my own boy, and I can do what I will with him." But it was not his own boy; it was God's boy. Always that good thing committed unto us, whatever it is, belongs not to us, but to God. We shall have to give account for it. When he was asked, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain resented the question. "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" He would have disclaimed responsibility, but he could not. He was indeed his brother's keeper. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground."

What our Master wants of us is that we be faithful to every trust. Faithfulness is a great word. It is the word which our Lord used in speaking of the judgment. Those who have

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## A Heart Garden

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been faithful shall be rewarded, whether their faithfulness was in small or large matters. We are living in days of vast things—great corporations dealing in millions, great transactions involving hundreds of millions. Some of us come to think that it is scarcely worth while to do business with dollars and cents. One hundred dollars, a thousand, five thousand dollars are figures so small in comparison with the enormous sums in which the world's great transactions are made that our little affairs seem of no account whatever. But he who is faithful in dealing with his five dollars is approved just as highly by God as is he who is faithful in handling his twenty millions.

An invalid writes from California that she had consecrated her life to missionary work, hoping to go to one of the great mission fields. Instead of this, however, she has spent the years thus far in a sick-room. We know, however, that Jesus is just as well pleased with what she has done, suffering for Him in sweet patience, making her chamber of pain

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## Guarding Our Trust

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a sanctuary of prayer and praise, as if she had been toiling in India, teaching the children, working among the women, or visiting the sick in hospitals. Faithfulness is doing what God gives us to do, and doing it patiently, sweetly, songfully. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The divine command is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." But "unto death" seems a long stretch of time. We fear we cannot hold out so long. Even a year sometimes seems a great while to continue in diligence without fainting by the way. God knows this, knows how long the way is, and deals very kindly with us, breaking our years into months and days. It will greatly simplify our faithfulness if we make it a daily matter, taking up each morning only the duty of the one short day. Anybody can carry a heavy load, or stand a sore strain, or keep up a keen struggle for one day. Any one can be true to God, devoted, loyal, obedient, submissive, for such a little space.

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## A Heart Garden

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*“Since time began,  
To-day has been the friend of man;  
But in his blindness and his sorrow  
He looks to yesterday and to-morrow.”*

Mr. Ruskin's motto was “To-day.” He had the watchword engraved on a block of chalcedony which always lay beside him on his table where he did his work. This watchword ruled all his life. He lived in to-day. He omitted no duty that belonged in its schedule. He never fretted about anything that did not belong in to-day. There is no better word for any of us to take as our motto. We cannot do anything with yesterday—well-lived, or left a blank, it must stand as it is. We can amend nothing in its record, strike out nothing, add nothing that was left out. To-morrow we cannot yet touch to make it beautiful. When it comes it will be soon enough to take it up. But to-day is ours. It is only a little space of time, and if we put all our whole soul into it we can make it almost perfect. If we live it in the sight of God, and do our day's work in the light of heaven, we can fill it with

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## Guarding Our Trust

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beauty and with good, so that it shall shine as a bright star among the days. Let the curtain drop on yesterday, hiding it and cutting it off completely; and on to-morrow, shutting out all alluring or anxious view of it, so that we may see only to-day. Then live intensely in this little space of time. Fill its hours with splendid faithfulness. Skimp nothing. Leave no task undone. Shirk no duty. Postpone no task that belongs to to-day. Do everything beautifully—yet not a moment be wasted. Let “Be ye perfect” be your impelling, inspiring motto.

Fill the day with love. Forget yourself and think of others. If there is a call for kindness, show the kindness now, to-day; it may be too late to-morrow. If a heart hungers for a word of appreciation, of commendation, of cheer, of encouragement, say the word to-day. The trouble with too many people is that they fill the day with neglects, with postponements, with omissions, with idle words and idle silences. We do not realize vividly enough that there are many things which if not done to-

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## A Heart Garden

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day need not be done at all. If we have slept through the hours when duty waited, we may as well then sleep on.

Let us learn well the lesson of "To-day." If we will master this one secret, we shall have the key to a beautiful and successful life. No one ever can fail who always makes to-day what he might make it. On the other hand, thousands of life failures are caused by letting to-day pass empty. Begin to-morrow morning. Make the day a shining one. Rise early and get God's blessing. Give the day to God and yourself to God for the day. Regard the day as doomsday for you, the most important day of your life, the day whose influence will pour down through all the future, the day whose deeds, words, decisions, and achievements will mould all your to-morrows. Decline no duty, however unpleasant—a duty not done will leave a blank in this day's record and a trail of regret in days and days to come. Never loiter on the way. Haste not, but rest not. Give every moment something worth while to keep. Love God,

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## Guarding Our Trust

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love your fellow-men. Live to-day as you would live it if you knew it were your last day—live it for God and for judgment.

*“Yea, that is life; make this forenoon sublime,  
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,  
And time is conquered and thy crown is won!”*

Every day we make beautiful by our faithfulness lifts our feet to a new and higher plane, and sets a better standard of living for us. We should never go back again to the things we have left behind. Perfection is the goal set before us, and we are never to cease striving for it. If we can be faithful to our trust for one day, we can be faithful another, and then another day, ever climbing upward. That should be our aim until self has been altogether forgotten, lost, and left behind in the absorbing passion to please God and do His will in all things and guard everything, small and great, that He entrusts to us.

*“If I could live to God for just one day,  
One blessed day, from rosy dawn of light,  
Till purple twilight deepened into night,*

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## A Heart Garden

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*A day of faith, unfaltering, trust complete,  
Of love unfeigned and perfect charity,  
Of hope undimmed, of courage past dismay,  
Of heavenly peace, patient humility—  
No hint of duty to constrain my feet,  
No dream of ease to lull to listlessness,  
Within my heart no root of bitterness,  
No yielding to temptation's subtle sway,  
Methinks in that one day would so expand  
My soul to meet such holy, high demand  
That never, never more could hold me bound  
This shrivelling husk or self that wraps me  
    round,  
So might I henceforth live to God alway."*



## The Lesson of Rest

*"Why linger, turn away, or idly grieve?*

*Where else is rest—the soul's supremest need?*

*Grandly He offers; meanly we receive;*

*Yet love that gives us rest is love indeed.*

*"The love that rests—say, shall it not do more?*

*Make haste, sad soul, thy heritage to claim.*

*It calms; it heals; it bears what erst ye bore,*

*And marks thy burdens with His own dear name."*

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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### The Lesson of Rest

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O words Jesus spoke have found welcome in more hearts than His promises of rest to weary and heavy laden ones. No other word touches the deep need of

human lives as this word does. What is this rest which Christ gives? It is not rest from labor, for work is one of the laws of life, and is necessary to health, growth, and happiness.

*“Rest is not quitting  
The busy career;  
Rest is but fitting  
One’s self to one’s sphere.”*

The world’s thought is that if we can get away from trouble, struggle, need, and suffering we shall find rest. In one of Job’s complaints he laments that he had ever been born, or that he had not died before his eyes saw the

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## A Heart Garden

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light. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary are at rest." But there is nothing noble in such a bitter cry. The rest of the grave is not the rest that Christ promises.

Nor can we ever find rest by fleeing from the place of God's appointment because it is a place of suffering. In one of the Psalms the writer is in great trouble, and cries to God to help him. Then he says:

*"Oh that I had wings like a dove!  
Then would I fly away, and be at rest."*

This, too, was a mistaken longing. The place where he was was the very place in which God wanted him to be, and he could never have found rest by fleeing from it. We can find rest only in the place of duty. Only the other day one wrote: "I wish I could leave all this tangle, this perplexity about money, this need for struggle." But he cannot get away. He is face to face with the necessity for courage, for action, for work, and he cannot escape from it. Then even if he could flee out

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## The Lesson of Rest

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of it all, he would not find rest. An old writer said about the wish in the Psalm: "David should have been praying for the strength of an ox to bear his trouble, not for the wings of a dove to flee away from it." That is the only manly way in such a case. Then it is the only way to find rest. We must stay in our place, perform our duty, bear our burden, and do God's will. That is the footpath to peace.

The rest that Christ gives is rest in the soul—not external ease. One may have it in all its sweetness and fullness, and yet have to toil unceasingly, and endure continual suffering and pain. Some of the best Christians the world has ever known have been the greatest sufferers, but meanwhile nothing has been able to break their rest.

Christ's call is not a call to less earnest living; rather it is a call to still greater activity, to more wholehearted service, to work that will count for more. They only can do their work well who have this rest in their hearts. The restless mind is unfitted for the best work.

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## A Heart Garden

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The prophet says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." The man who accomplishes most is the man who has calmness in his heart. The prophet says again, "He that believeth shall not be in haste." Some people are always in feverish haste. They rush restlessly from morning till night. This makes them excited, flustered, fretted. The commentaries tell us that the words may be translated, "He that believeth shall not fuss." He who has his mind set on God is not in haste. He has the quietness of God in his soul. He is complete master of himself, and never becomes excited. Nothing hinders more in life than hurry. Schiller's lines teach the lesson well:

*"Without haste, without rest;"  
Bind the motto to thy breast;  
Bear it with thee as a spell;  
Storm or sunshine, guard it well;  
Heed not flowers that round thee bloom—  
Bear it onward to the tomb.*

*Haste not; let no reckless deed  
Mar for aye the spirit's speed;*

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## The Lesson of Rest

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*Ponder well, and know the right;  
Forward, then, with all thy might!  
Haste not, years cannot atone  
For one reckless action done.*

*Rest not; time is sweeping by;  
Do and dare before you die.  
Something mighty and sublime  
Leave behind to conquer time;  
Glorious 'tis to live for aye,  
When these forms have passed away.  
Haste not—rest not; calmly wait,  
Meekly bear the storms of fate;  
Duty be thy polar guide;  
Do the right whate'er betide.  
Haste not—rest not; conflicts past,  
God shall crown thy work at last.*

It is Christ's rest we need in order to make our lives calm and strong. Restlessness makes us weak. It unnerves our hand, so that our work is not well done. It disquiets our mind, so that we cannot think clearly. It disturbs our faith, so that we lose our hold upon God and eternal things. We can do our best work in any sphere only when we are at peace with God. This rest of Christ, instead of sapping

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## A Heart Garden

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our energy and making us less active and enthusiastic in our Master's service, will give us a new secret of strength, and put into our hearts a new impulse to work. Our work lacks power because we are not at rest. Our spiritual life lacks depth—it is too much like the noisy, fussy stream that splutters down the hillside, and too little like the quiet lake that is noiseless and still, its peaceful depths undisturbed by the surface storms. One day of quiet work with the rest of Christ in the heart will do more for the kingdom of God than a whole month of nervous, restless, fretted activity.

There are two promises of rest: First, Jesus said, "I will give you rest." Then He said, "Ye shall find rest." He gives rest at once to those who come to Him, but it is not the full and complete rest. Rest is a divine gift, but it is also a lesson which we have to learn. It is not only the rest of forgiveness, but a rest that extends to all the life, to the desires, the ambitions, the cravings; a rest that holds all the life in its sway. The lesson is not easy.



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## The Lesson of Rest

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To teach a human life, with its mighty energies and sublime capacities, to be still is not an easy matter. It is a task that requires years.

The lesson is learned by taking Christ's yoke upon us. A yoke is a symbol of submission. Captive kings put their necks under the yoke of their conquerors. A yoke also implies service. Animals are yoked together that they may draw a load. We are yoked with Christ. We enter upon a life which our Master shares with us. If we have a duty or a task, He walks beside us. If it is a sorrow we are called to endure, He shares it. Every burden we have to carry, He carries it. In all our afflictions, He is afflicted. To be yoked with Christ is the highest honor that could be ours.

We must also enter Christ's school and learn of Him if we would find the larger, fuller measure of this rest which is promised. Each new experience is a new lesson set for us by our great Teacher. There will come to you a sharp temptation to-morrow. While God permits it, He does not mean to have you sin.

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## A Heart Garden

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He does not mean to make life hard for you. He lets you be put to the trial that you may learn to resist, to come out victorious and strong. Every temptation is a lesson. Even Jesus learned by the things that He suffered. If a new duty comes to your hand, a new task, a new responsibility, God has turned another page in your lesson book, setting the copy at the top for you.

The Christian graces all have to be learned. They do not come naturally to any one. St. Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." It is a satisfaction to us to know that he had to learn to be contented, and that he was well on in years before he had mastered the lesson. So we have to learn to be patient, to be meek, giving a soft answer to hard words, to insults, to wrongs. We have to learn to be forgiving toward those who injure us. We have to learn to be unselfish. Selfishness stands in the way of our obtaining the fullness of Christ's rest. It is hard for us to give up our own way, our own interest, our own comfort.

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## The Lesson of Rest

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Many a man's heaviest burden is himself. Unselfishness is one of the longest and hardest lessons we have to learn. But we must learn it, for we cannot know the joy of perfect rest until we get our selfishness mastered.

These are hints of the meaning of the Master's words, "Learn of Me, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Dr. Babcock's little poem, "School Days," interprets life to us in this way:

*Lord, let me make this rule,  
To think of life as a school,  
And try my best  
To stand each test,  
And do my work,  
And nothing shirk.*

*Some day the bell will sound,  
Some day my heart will bound,  
As with a shout  
That school is out  
And lessons done,  
I homeward run.*

In attaining the fullness of Christ's rest we must stay in Christ's school till the end. We

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## A Heart Garden

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must have lessons, lessons, continually. Every one who comes before us sets a little lesson for us. We say this person tries us. Well, that is just the reason we need to see him often, until we have learned to keep sweet. Sickness comes, that in the quiet of the darkened room we may learn the lesson of patience, trust, and peace. People think a season spent in a sick-room is lost time. Perhaps no days of our life will mean as much to us at the end as the days we have spent in pain, shut away from active life. Sudden danger comes, not to startle us, but to teach us not to be startled by any alarm, any terror, since God is keeping us. One of Alice Freeman Palmer's hymns was written after a time of great danger. While she was lying ill, lightning struck the house, shattering it, destroying the room next to hers. She was interested in the occurrence, as something that had been planned for her entertainment. She was not disturbed. Then she wrote a hymn that bears the date of this experience.

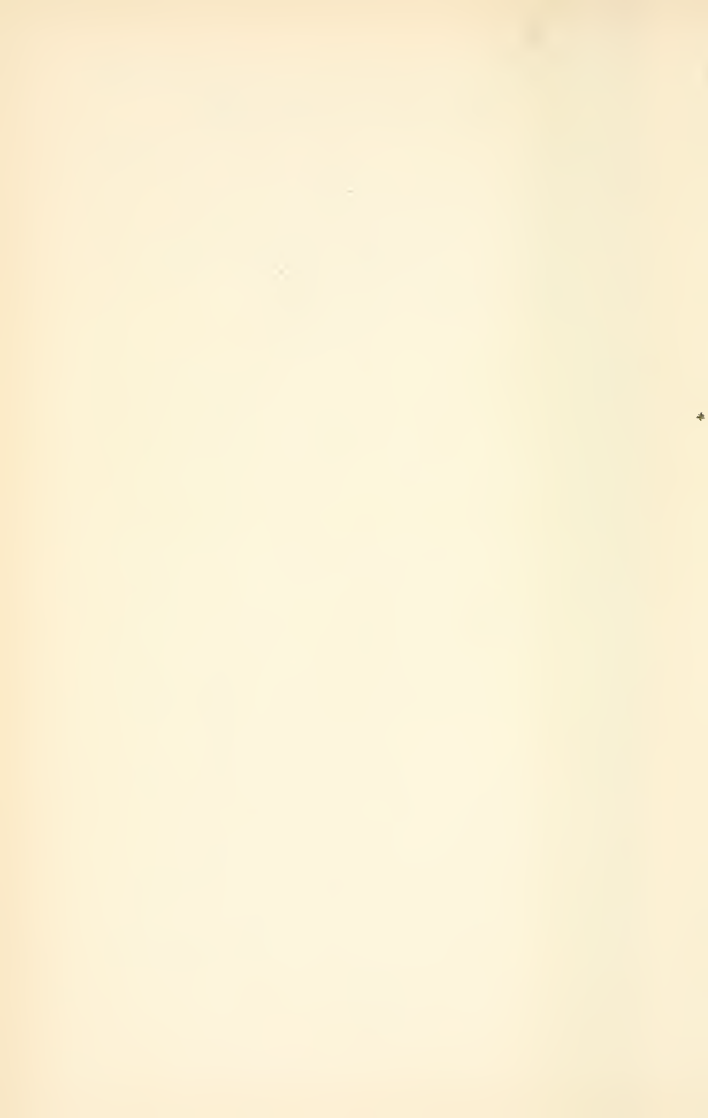
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## The Lesson of Rest

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*He shall give His angels charge  
Over thee in all thy ways.  
Though the thunders roam at large,  
Though the lightning round me plays,  
Like a child I lay my head  
In sweet sleep upon my bed.*

Many Christians seem never to learn this lesson of rest. Their faith in God seems to do little for them. They tremble before every smallest danger. They are afraid of to-morrow lest it bring want or pain. But there are no accidents in the believer's life. God watches over each of His children. We say we believe these things. Why, then, do we not have the rest? Let us get the lesson: "Learn of Me, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls."



## “The Message of Comfort”

*A little way to walk with you, my own—  
Only a little way.  
Then one of us must weep and walk alone  
Until God's day.*

*A little way! It is so sweet to live  
Together, that I know  
Life would not have one withered rose to give  
If one of us should go.*

*And if these lips should ever learn to smile,  
With thy heart far from mine,  
'Twould be for joy that in a little while  
They would be kissed by thine!*

—FRANK L. STANTON.



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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### “The Message of Comfort”

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OD loves to be a comforter.

His heart is ever tender and compassionate toward human pain and suffering. One of the great chapters of Isaiah opens

with these words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.” The people were in exile, but now the period of their captivity was drawing to an end, and the messengers were sent to speak words of comfort and cheer.

When Dr. Watson (“Ian Maclaren”) resigned his church in Liverpool after long service, he said that if he were beginning his ministry, instead of closing it, there were three things he would do: He would preach shorter sermons, he would be more attentive to his English, and he would preach more comfortingly. Perhaps it would be a good thing if

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## A Heart Garden

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all who preach would note these wise counsels. It may be that our sermons are too long. It is certain that not all of us give sufficient heed to our English. But perhaps we err most in not preaching more comfortingly to the people who come to hear us. A professor in a theological seminary said to the students: "Never fail in any service to speak a word of comfort. No congregation, however small, ever assembles but there is in it at least one person in sorrow who will go away unhelped if in Scripture lesson, hymn, prayer, or sermon there is nothing to comfort a mourner, or to lift up a heavy heart." An American preacher said: "I never look over a congregation of people waiting for a message from my lips without thinking of what burdens many of them are carrying, through what struggles they are passing, what sorrows they are enduring, and how much they need comfort and encouragement, that they may be able to go on in their pilgrim journey."

Comfort was to be the burden of the ministry

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## “The Message of Comfort”

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of the Old-Testament prophets. When we look into the Bible we find it full of comfort from beginning to end. On every page God is trying to get men to believe that He loves them, that He is their friend, that He wants to do them good. There is not a chapter in the Scriptures which does not in some way reveal or declare the divine mercy. That is what makes the Bible such a dear and precious book to the weary, the struggling, the disappointed, the wronged, the bereaved, the lonely. Wherever they open it they find the divine sympathy, the divine love, promises of help, of strength, of comfort. The Bible is like a mother's bosom, to lay one's head upon in time of pain or distress. It is a book not so much for the strong, the victorious, the glad, as for those who have been hurt, for those who are in darkness. So long as there are tears and sorrows, broken hearts and crushed hopes, lives bowed down, and spirits sad and despairing, so long will the Bible be a book believed in as the very word of God, an inspired book, full of encouragement,

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## A Heart Garden

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light, hope, help, and strength for earth's weary ones.

We need great wisdom for the ministry of comfort. Some who have it in their hearts to be comforters of others altogether fail in their efforts. Job's friends, when they had learned of his trouble, came to sympathize with him. But, instead of comforting him, they made his trouble only the harder to bear by their ill-advised words, telling him that his afflictions were in punishment of his sins, and pitying him because he was enduring sore divine judgments. We can sympathize with him when he cried: "Miserable comforters are ye all!"

We need to make sure that we understand God's way of giving comfort. This is beautifully illustrated in the message in Isaiah, "Comfort ye My people, saith your God." These two little possessive pronouns are wonderfully suggestive—"my" and "your"; "My people," "your God." The people were in exile, but they were still God's people. He had not cast them off, though they had

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## “The Message of Comfort”

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sinned. Could any other comfort mean more to our hearts than to know that God calls us His children? Yet that is our comfort in every hour of suffering, in every sorrow we have to bear. This was the comfort which came to Jesus Himself on the cross. In the darkness He lost sight of God's face for a time. It seemed as though He was forsaken. But in the desolate blackness about Him He still knew that God was His—“My God! My God!” He cried. In the darkness of any sorrow the friends of Christ may always say this. To God's word, “My people,” they may answer back, “My God.”

There is another suggestive word in the message. “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.” The words are rendered in other sweet ways by Bible scholars. One \* puts it, “Speak ye home to the heart of Jerusalem.” “Jerusalem lay in ruins,” as one writer puts it; “a city through whose breached walls all the winds of heaven blew mournfully across her forsaken floors. And the heart of Jerusalem,

\* Dr. George Adam Smith, in *The Expositor's Bible*.

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## A Heart Garden

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which was with her people in exile, was like the city—broken and defenceless. In that far-off, unsympathetic land it lay open to the alien, tyrants forced their idols upon it, the peoples tortured it with their jests.” Yet how gently God comes, and how sweetly He speaks of His love! “Speak ye home to the heart, up against the heart, or up round the heart of Jerusalem.” It was the Hebrew expression for the lover’s wooing. The words were those with which a man would plead at a maiden’s heart. That is the way God bids His prophets comfort Jerusalem. That is the way, too, He would have us comfort His children who are in sorrow.

One of the most beautiful words in this great book of Isaiah occurs in the last chapter. God is speaking of the return of blessing to His people after the captivity. “I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream.” Then He adds: “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted.” One of the favorite figures of Isaiah

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## “The Message of Comfort”

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is that of a mother suckling her children and cradling them in her own bosom. Here it is still the mother that is in the prophet's thoughts, but it is the grown man instead of the infant that he sees coming back with wounds and weariness upon him and to receive his mother's comfort. One writes:

*“No word of all the Scripture  
Thrills a sweeter chord than this—  
Stirs a richer retrospection  
Of the soul's experienced bliss—  
Than this promise, where the Spirit  
Strengthens weak and timid faith  
With assurance of His comfort—  
‘As a mother comforteth.’”*

God's first coming to us is in our mother. He could not come then to us otherwise. Infancy could not understand God in His majesty, glory, and greatness. So our mother's tenderness, yearning, devotion, and fondness are from God, revealings of God's own heart, God Himself coming to the child in the mother. We may never be afraid that we can overstate the tenderness and care of the

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## A Heart Garden

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divine love. Indeed, we are apt to put God too far off, thinking of Him too much in His majesty and greatness. Sinai is not the truest revealing of Him. Jesus with little children in His arms, or a mother comforting her hurt child, is better.

*“Why seek ye for Jehovah  
’Mid Sinai’s awful smoke?  
The burning bush now shelters  
A sparrow’s humble folk;  
The curve of God’s sweet heaven  
Is the curve of the leaf of oak;  
The Voice that stilled the tempest  
To the little children spoke—  
The bread of life eternal  
Is the bread He blessed and broke.”*

The word comfort comes from a root which signifies to strengthen. When God comforts us He does not take away the sorrow. The loneliness is still ours. He does not give back the loved one that has slipped away. Instead of this He gives us strength to go on in the lonely path without the accustomed presence. He helps us to bear the sorrow and still sing.



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## “The Message of Comfort”

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He comforts by strengthening. This divine strength comes to us in many ways. Other loved ones left mean more to us since the break in the circle. We see beauties in them we had never seen before. The fact that one is gone makes us conscious that we shall not always have even those that now remain, and thus they grow dearer to us. Sorrow draws the household closer together. It makes all more patient, the one with the other, more thoughtful, more kind, more forbearing. It is wonderful how much more comfort we get from those who are living, after a bereavement, than we did before. Then the memories of the beautiful lives which have been taken become a source of inspiration and strength to us.

Not all sorrow, however, comes through bereavement, and not all of God's comfort is for the bereft. In the case of the people of Israel to whom God sent His prophets with the message of comfort the sorrow was because of the exile. They had been taken away into captivity. They had been broken as a nation and carried into a strange land. Now the bidding

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## A Heart Garden

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was, "Comfort ye My people, saith your God." They had been crushed and broken, but not destroyed. They would come again from their humiliation, prepared for new glory.

We do not need to go back to ancient history to find parallels to this experience. The life of earth is full of its captivities, its times of suffering, its periods of sickness. Many who have had no bereavements need God's comfort quite as much as those who have had many sorrows. Writers of the history of ancient times tell us of the benefits which the Jewish nation received from the captivity in Babylon. Before they were carried away their besetting sin was idolatry. They were continually turning from the true God to serve the gods of the heathen. But their stay in exile cured them of this sin. In other ways, too, were they benefited by their captivity. This was God's intention in permitting them to be carried away. The captivity was not an accident. The seventy years were not lost years. The people were not out of God's

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## “The Message of Comfort”

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thought, nor out of God's care, while away from their own land. God kept His eye upon them, and made their time of captivity a most profitable period for them.

It is the same in the experience of God's children everywhere. There are breaks in prosperity. There are times of sickness, when men are taken away from activity, when their work ceases, and their hands hang down in enforced idleness. There are business failures, experiences which seem disastrous, when the work of years is swept away, when great plans come to nothing. Yet none of these trials are intended to be destructive. True success is not merely a career with no checks, no interruptions, no defeats and failures. We are here rather to grow into men. God wants to make something of us, to cleanse us of the evil in us and to form us into the image of Christ. Ofttimes He can do this only by allowing us to fall under sore discipline. A musician ordered of a violinmaker the best instrument he could make. At length the musician was sent for to come and try his instrument. As

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## A Heart Garden

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he drew the bow across the strings his face clouded and he became angry. Lifting the instrument he dashed it to pieces on the table, paid the price he had contracted to pay, and left the shop. But the violinmaker gathered up the broken pieces and set to work to re-make the instrument. Again the musician was sent for, and drew the bow across the strings as before. The violin was perfect. He asked the price. "Nothing," the violinmaker replied. "This is the same instrument you broke to pieces. I put it together, and out of the shattered fragments this perfect instrument has been made." That is the way God does oftentimes with men's lives. They are not what they ought to be. Outwardly they may seem very beautiful, but no sweet music comes from them. They are lacking in spirituality, and the likeness of Christ does not appear in them. Then God permits them to be broken in sorrow or suffering, and with the fragments makes a new life which yields praise, honor, and blessing.

There ought to be unspeakable comfort in

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## “The Message of Comfort”

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this teaching for us. To many, life seems only a failure. It is full of disappointments. The things we seek elude us, and our hands are empty after years of hoping and striving. There is much sorrow in the world. Many are discouraged and disheartened. It is to these that God's comfort comes. This is our Father's world, and He never forgets one of His children. We need not be cast down or give up in despair, whatever our experience may be. The poet's word is true:

*“God's in His heaven—  
All's right with the world.”*

But that is only half the truth. “God's in His heaven,” truly, but God is also on His earth, near to each one of us evermore. He is making us—that is the meaning of the experiences we are having. If only we will leave our lives in His hands, only good can ever come to us.



## On Being a Peacemaker

*When over the fair fame of friend or foe  
The shadow of disgrace shall fall; instead  
Of words of blame, or proof of thus and so,  
Let something good be said.*

*Forget not that no fellow-being yet  
May fall so low but love may lift his head:  
Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet  
If something good be said.*

*And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,  
And by the cross on which the Saviour bled,  
And by your own soul's hope of fair renown,  
Let something good be said.*

—JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



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## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### On Being a Peacemaker

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O one of the Beatitudes has a greater promise than that for the peacemakers. "They shall be called the children of God," said the Master. This must be because they are like God. God is a peacemaker, and we become His children just in the measure in which we are peacemakers.

In one of the prophets, God reveals His desire for the peace of His people by saying: "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace." Always God desires His children to have peace. He wishes them to be at peace with Him, to be reconciled to Him, accepting His grace and love, and entering into fellowship with Him. He wishes them to have His peace, the very peace of God, in their hearts, amid all the trials and sorrows of life. Christ be-

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## A Heart Garden

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queathed His peace to His friends. "My peace I give unto you." Then He wants them to be at peace among themselves. Strife between brothers is unseemly, undivine. If we are God's children we will share with Him all these desires for peace.

In a narrower sense, a peacemaker is one who seeks to cure dissensions, to bring together those who are in any way estranged, to remove misunderstandings, and to promote peaceable relations among men. It is a noble mission, one to which every follower of Christ should be heartily devoted. The blessing upon the peacemaker is so great, so exalted, so divine that every one should be eager to win it.

One way to be a peacemaker is to live a peaceable life oneself. Perhaps there has been too little attention paid to the cultivation of the graces of Christian life. Doctrinal soundness has been insisted upon as a test of Christian life more than sweetness of spirit and beauty of character have been. An irritable temper is too often regarded, not, indeed, as a quality

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## On Being a Peacemaker

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to be admired and commended, but, at the worst, as an excusable infirmity, one that must be charitably tolerated, a weakness so common among good people that no one can reprove his neighbor for it. So many Christian men and women are touchy and easily offended, so easily hurt and so likely to hold a grudge, that it seems necessary to leave a wide margin in defining what religion requires of its followers in the matter of patience and forbearance.

But the teaching of Jesus on this point is very clear. He insists on love, not merely as a fine sentiment, but as a quality of daily life, affecting all its relations and its contact with others. "I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." There would seem to be no place left in this teaching for resisting wrong, for resentment, for retaliation. Certainly strife is not commended by our Master.

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## A Heart Garden

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In the epistles, too, there is many an exhortation to peaceable living. For example, St. Paul counsels Christians, as much as in them lies, to live peaceably with all men. If there must be quarreling, it should not be the fault of the Christian. He must not begin it. It must not come through his insisting on his rights. He must do all in his power to get along with his neighbor without strife. If others are disposed to be quarrelsome, he must meet the disagreeable spirit with love, overcoming evil with good. "The finest thing about our rights," says George Macdonald, "is that, being our own, we can give them up."

According to the New Testament, whatever is unloving in act, word, or spirit is to be avoided. All malice, bitterness, clamor, and evil-speaking are to be put off, and all meekness, patience, kindness, and thoughtfulness are to be put on. We may do a great deal as a peacemaker by always keeping love in our hearts. In the Bahama Islands wells of sweet water are often seen near the sea. They rise

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## On Being a Peacemaker

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and fall with the tide, and yet they are always fresh and sweet. As the water filters from the sea through the coral it loses its brackish saltiness. A Christian's heart should be such a well, sweetened by the grace of God and yielding only love, instead of nature's resentment and bitterness.

We may be peacemakers also by living so that it will be impossible for any one to quarrel with us. The influence of such a life in a community works continually toward peaceableness. One contentious person can fill a whole neighborhood with strife. A quarrelsome man stirs up bitterness wherever he goes. But one person who has the forbearing spirit, who meekly endures wrongs himself rather than contend against them, is a maker of peace. Others are influenced by his example. Every time we keep silent under insult, and loving and sweet under provocation, we have made it easier for all about us to do the same.

We may seek to be peacemakers also by exerting all our influence to prevent dissensions among others. We find continually, as

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## A Heart Garden

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we go among men, the beginnings of bitterness and estrangement. In every community there are whisperers who go about retailing gossip, the tendency of which is to separate friends. Every Christian should be a discourager of tale-bearing. Too many people encourage it. They are glad to hear something unpleasant about another, and are quick to pass it on. Such eagerness is not commendable. Some one tells us a good way to deal with this evil:

*"If you are tempted to reveal  
A tale some one to you has told  
About another, make it pass,  
Before you speak, three gates of gold.*

*"Three narrow gates: First, 'Is it true?'  
Then, 'Is it needful?' In your mind  
Give truthful answer. And the next  
Is last and narrowest—'Is it kind?'*

*"And if to reach your lips at last  
It passes through these gateways three,  
Then you may tell the tale, nor fear  
What the result of speech may be."*

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## On Being a Peacemaker

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There are peace destroyers who delight in sowing doubt and suspicion of others in people's minds. One often learns, in close fellowship with others, that two neighbors or friends are in danger of becoming enemies. Now is the opportunity for the peacemaker's ministry. Instead of aggravating the little beginning of bitterness, as he may do by a word of encouragement, he should set about to try to heal the breach and restore confidence. Usually it is not hard to do this. Many quarrels begin in a slight misunderstanding, and a few words spoken by a true-hearted peacemaker will show, first to one and then to the other, that there is really no cause for ill feeling, that the doubt of loyalty is unjust, and that a separation or an estrangement is not only unnecessary, but would be positively sinful.

A true peacemaker, going about thus, trying to draw people ever closer together and to heal all threatened contentions and quarrels, is doing a divine work of love in the world. The great majority of strifes among men

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## A Heart Garden

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are needless. They are caused by the meddlesomeness of outside parties. Or they come from hasty words or acts unconfessed and unrepented of. The peacemaker's word, spoken at the right moment, would prevent all this.

We may do the peacemaker's work also by seeking always to bring together those who have become estranged. In every community there are such persons. Sometimes they live under the same roof and eat at the same table. There are brothers and sisters, there even are husbands and wives, who are farther apart than any strangers. A thick wall of rock has been built up between them. It may be difficult to do anything to heal such estrangements. But even in the most unhappy and most hopeless alienations the peacemaker's holy work may yet be crowned with success. It requires great wisdom and the purest and most unselfish love. It requires both patience and prayer, for only God can be the real peacemaker in such cases, and the most we can do is to interpret His love to those we



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## On Being a Peacemaker

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seek to bring together. Yet many a blessed reconciliation, followed by a long and sweet friendship, has been brought about by a wise and Christlike peacemaker.

Still another way in which we can get the blessing of the peacemaker is by seeking to diffuse more and more of the love of Christ. This we may do in our own life by showing patience, gentleness, and forbearance wherever we go, under whatsoever evil treatment we may be called to endure. Christians should make their homes homes of peace, in which no angry word shall ever be heard. But home is not the only sphere of such influence. It is wonderful how much one noble nature may do toward making it easier for all in a community to live sweetly by the warm tides of its own lovingness changing the atmosphere of a whole circle.



## The Other Man

*“When navies are forgotten  
And fleets are useless things;  
When the dove shall warm her bosom  
Beneath the eagle’s wings:*

*“When memory of battles  
At last is strange and old;  
When nations have one banner  
And creeds have found one fold;*

*“When the Hand that sprinkles midnight  
With its powdered drifts of suns  
Has hushed this tiny tumult  
Of sects and swords and guns,*

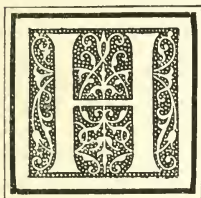
*“Then Hate’s last note of discord  
In all God’s worlds shall cease,  
In the conquest which is service,  
In the victory which is peace!”*

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### The Other Man

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IS neighbor," not himself, the teaching runs. "Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying." If the inspiration for this teaching had come from the spirit of the world, it would have run somewhat thus: "Let every one of us please himself, for his own advancement and entertainment, for his own gratification." But the inspiration is from the divine Spirit, and, therefore, the words read as they do.

St. Paul has much to say in his epistles about liberty and love. At that time one of the burning questions in the church was whether it was right for Christians to eat meats which had been offered to idols. St. Paul settled the question instantly for himself. An idol was nothing—only a piece of stone or wood or

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## A Heart Garden

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metal. It had no effect on the meats which were dedicated to it.

Did not that, then, settle the question of duty once for all? No; there is something besides law—there is love. This bids us think of the other man. “Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak.” There are some who are not so strong as you are. They think it wrong to eat these dedicated meats, but if they see you eating them they may be emboldened to partake themselves. Thus through the influence of your example they would violate their conscience and thus sin. So “through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died.” Conscientious of his own liberty, St. Paul yet thought of the other man, and would yield his liberty when there was the least danger that if he claimed it he might cause a weak brother to sin. “Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble.” This is the principle which St. Paul enun-

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## The Other Man

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ciates. We are not to please ourselves. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. If the companion with whom you are walking is unable to go fast, you must go slow, thus accommodating yourself to his feebler strength and slower step. We are to think always of the other man. That is what the law of love bids us do. It is not an easy lesson. Some one says: "If a man would live at ease, let him beware of love. If he love a country, it may call him suddenly to hardship and death. If he love art, it will set him heartbreaking lessons of trial and self-surrender. If he love truth, it will call him to part company with his friends. If he love men, their sorrows will sit by his fire and shadow its brightness. If he love some other soul as the life of his life, he must put his happiness at the hazard of every day's chances of life and death. . . . Love is a more terrible master than law, and they who follow must stand ready to strip themselves of all lesser possessions."

"Let each one of us please his neighbor."

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## A Heart Garden

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Blot self out of your thought. That is the first great lesson.

*“Love thyself last. Look near, behold thy duty  
To those who walk beside thee down life’s  
road;  
Make glad their days by little acts of beauty,  
And help them bear the burden of earth’s  
load.*

*“Love thyself last. Look far and find the  
stranger  
Who staggers ’neath his sin and his despair;  
Go lend a hand, and lead him out of danger,  
To heights where he may see the world is  
fair.”*

But there is more of the lesson. At least, there is a qualification. Pleasing the other man is not all. We might please him to his hurt. He may have a heavy burden, and it would please him to have us come up beside him and lift the burden away. But that might do him harm, defeating the purpose of God in giving him the burden. The lessons may be hard, and it might please the child if we would sit down



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## The Other Man

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beside him in the evening and do them for him. But it would not be a kindness to him. Love makes a great many mistakes of this kind. Some one writes: "The mother who defeats the growth of her child by releasing it from a distasteful discipline is not devoted, but ignorant; the father who shields his son from the penalties that might arrest the downward tendency is not tender, but cruel." Some people are pleased by flattery, but flattery only puffs up—does not edify, build up. There are some whom sin pleases—but sin leaves curse, not blessing; harm, not help.

We must read the whole of the lesson: "Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying." Our pleasing of him must always be for his good. Edifying means building up. This was a favorite figure with St. Paul. He had seen the great buildings in ancient cities. He knew that they had risen slowly, block by block, column by column, touch by touch, until at last they were finished and stood forth in majesty and strength. To edify men is to put some new

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## A Heart Garden

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block in its place in the temple of their character.

*"Souls are built as temples are—  
Inch by inch in gradual rise  
Mount the layered masonries.*

*"Souls are built as temples are—  
Here a carving rich and quaint,  
There the image of a saint;  
Here a deep-hued pane to tell  
Sacred truth or miracle;  
Every little helps the much,  
Every careful—careless—touch  
Adds a charm or leaves a scar."*

We must see to it that our pleasing of others always ministers to their good in some way, edifies them, adds something to their character, makes them braver, stronger, truer, happier. The world is full of discouraged people, and we have power to say a hopeful word or do a kindness which will drive the discouragement from their hearts and nerve them again with strength for brave, victorious, and songful living.

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## The Other Man

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We must keep in mind, as we go on, that St. Paul is talking about the weak brother. We are quite apt to feel that it is unreasonable to ask us strong people, eager to get on and making long strides, to curb our desires and take short, mincing steps in order that the weak brother can keep up with us. Men, full of life, strenuous, daring, courageous men, say that it is absurd to expect them to restrain themselves and check their energies in waiting for the timid ones, the halting ones. But St. Paul says: "Let us not judge one another any more; but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way."

The teaching of all this is that we should be willing and ready at all times and in all ways to deny ourselves, to make sacrifices, to give up our own rights, when any other one would be hurt by our going on in our own swift and strenuous way. Christ died for the weak brother with whom we find it so hard to be patient. If Christ died for him, does it need any argument to show that we ought to be

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## A Heart Garden

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willing to give up our rights in little or even in greater matters in order to help him along? One of the most beautiful sights one ever sees is some strong man, wise and great, stooping in patience to help along in life one who is weak, dull, ignorant, slow.

Some of us chafe and fret when those we would help get on so slowly, when we have to tell them the same thing over and over a hundred times. But we should remember how gentle Jesus was with His disciples in their dulness. He never once showed impatience with them. David, at the close of his long and great life, when accounting for his success, attributed it all to God's forbearance with his slowness and stumbling. "Thy gentleness," he said, "hath made me great." It is a lesson that all need to learn—how to deal with the weak brother so as to help him along, and to get him strong at last. So we see that there is something greater, more sacred, than liberty, than rights. Love is the greatest thing in the world. If there is danger that a man's moderate drinking may lead

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## The Other Man

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a weak brother to immoderate drinking, thus causing him to perish for whom Christ died, what should the man do? He may assert his rights, but that is not the lesson that love would teach him.

We are to see to it that everything we do and every influence of our life shall be for our neighbor's good. If a man has no neighbors, if he lives alone on an island far from other human habitation, he may say that he can do as he pleases, for no one can be hurt or disturbed by anything he does. But that is not the way any of us live. There are other people all about us, and every word and act of ours will affect their lives. We are bound so to live that we shall do hurt to none, but shall edify—add something beautiful to the life of every one. A boy may enjoy beating his drum, or a man may insist on playing his cornet till midnight in his second-story room. But suppose his playing keeps his neighbor awake, or disturbs the sleep of a sick man next door, what about the higher law of love?

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## A Heart Garden

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It is a most serious thing to live. It is a serious thing to live our own life, even if no other one were concerned, for we must give account for every idle word, for every act, and for every neglect of duty. But it adds immeasurably to life's seriousness to remember that we are responsible for every touch we give to any life that falls in the slightest way under our influence. One was telling of a look of bitter anger from another, once a friend, in a chance meeting on the street. The look left a wound in a gentle heart, a wound which will be long in healing. We must think of the sin of grieving or injuring those who love us. Let us think still more seriously of causing others to sin. No matter what it may cost us, let us live only to bless, to help, to save others. There is a beautiful legend, told by James Buckham, of two saints—Saint Cassianus and Saint Nicholas.

*Saint Cassianus entered heaven's gate  
And sought the throne whereon his Master sate.  
Before the Lord of life he proudly stood  
With spotless robes and mien of saintlihood.*

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## The Other Man

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*Then spake the Christ: "What sawest thou, to-day,  
My Cassianus, on thy heavenward way?"*

*"I saw," he said, "a peasant in a bog,  
All smeared with slime and stranded like a log."  
"And didst thou help him?" asked the shining  
One,  
With smile that lit His beauty like the sun.  
"Not I," said Cassianus. "There he lay  
Till some one soiled as he should pass that way."*

*"Why didst thou leave him thus?" the Master  
sighed.*

*"My robes were white," Saint Cassianus cried.  
Then entered heaven Saint Nicholas, and came  
And knelt before the throne as if in shame.*

*"Why stained and soiled, My child?" his Master  
said.*

*Saint Nicholas but lower bent his head.*

*"I saw a peasant in a bog, O Lord.  
Helpless he lay, but uttered not a word.  
Then straightway to his aid I ran, and lo!  
The mire hath stained my robes that were as snow.  
I am not fit. I pray Thee let me dwell  
Where unto Thee, O Lord, it seemeth well."*

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## A Heart Garden

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*"Blessed art thou, Saint Nicholas, My child!"  
The Lord made answer. "Thou art not defiled,  
But purer, nobler, for thy gracious deed,  
Thy ministry to a brother's need.  
Among My saints elect I bid thee stand—  
Thou, Cassianus, on the other hand."*

The reward of sacrifices made in serving our fellow-men is divine commendation and honor. Those who suffer in helping others upward will find their wounds marks of blessing and beauty. The saintliness which will have the highest place in the kingdom of grace is not the saintliness which keeps its garments white by withholding itself from human need and sin, but that which, like the Master Himself, goes down into the lowest depths to lift up the fallen and the sorrowing.

Let us take the lesson out into our life to-morrow—"Not self, but the other man." One had for a motto, "Others." Shall not we make this word our motto, blotting out the unsightly, undivine word "myself," and writing instead the beautiful, Christly motto, "Think of the other man"?



## Making Our Report

*"How infinite and sweet, Thou everywhere  
And all-abounding Love, Thy service is!*

. . . . .

*"And I should fear, but lo! amid the press,  
The whirl and hum and pressure of my day,  
I hear Thy garments sweep, Thy seamless dress,  
And close beside my work and weariness  
Discern Thy gracious form, not far away,  
But very near, O Lord, to help and bless.*

*"The busy fingers fly, the eyes may see  
Only the glancing needle which they hold,  
But all my life is blossoming inwardly,  
And every breath is like a litany,  
While through each labor, like a thread of gold,  
Is woven the sweet consciousness of Thee."*

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

### Making Our Report

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IT is well for a friend of Christ to maintain the most intimate relations with his Master. There are wise mothers who train their boys to give them their full confidence, telling them all that they do, all that they hear. They report the conversations they have with other boys, and all that takes place when they are at school and at play. The boys are happy who have such mothers. It takes almost infinite gentleness and tact in a mother to keep such confidence as her boy grows older. Yet there are mothers who are their sons' confidential friends even in their young manhood. A boy never goes far wrong who comes to his mother every evening and tells her all he has done that day.

This is also the ideal relation for the Chris-

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## A Heart Garden

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tian with his Lord. When the apostles returned from their experimental missionary tour, it is said that they told their Master all things whatsoever they had done. It will help us greatly in our Christian life if we will train ourselves to the habit of reporting to Christ continually all that we do and say. We may come every evening to His feet and tell Him all about the work and the life of the day.

Each day is a miniature life. We are born in the morning out of the darkness of the night. We live through the hours till evening comes again, and then we sink away into the death of sleep. Each morning we are sent out by our Master, commissioned by Him to do certain tasks, to touch certain lives, to leave in the world certain blessings, to endure certain temptations, to suffer or rejoice, as the case may be. At the close of the day we come back to make report, in our evening prayer, of all that we have done, not only the good and beautiful things, the obediences, the kindnesses, the victories over evil, the things that

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## Making Our Report

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have been helpful to others, but also the foolish things, the disobediences, the defeats, the neglects of duty.

If we remember as we go through the day that everything we do or say, and everything we fail to do or say, must be reported to our Master, it would make us more careful as the moments pass what we do and what we fail to do. We would not do the things it would shame us to look into Christ's face and tell Him we did. We will learn to do only what it will give us pleasure to report to Him. It would do much to make us always charitable and kind to others, for we shall not care to tell the Master that we said little all day but unkindly words of our neighbors. If we constrain ourselves to report in our evening prayers all our criticisms of others, all our uncharitable words, and all our blaming and fault-finding, we shall soon be cured of the habit of censoriousness, and we shall learn to do and say only the things we shall be glad to tell our Lord.

We need never dread telling Christ of our

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## A Heart Garden

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failures for the day. And there always will be failures. Our moods will not always be gentle. Sometimes we will speak rashly and harshly. We will not always be patient and thoughtful. Unseemly tempers will break out in spite of our determination always to keep sweet. We will fail many a time to be loving. But the Master will be infinitely gracious and gentle in dealing with our faults and failures. He is more kindly than a mother. No words in the Bible are sweeter to a faithful Christian, certain nights when he comes to his evening prayer, than these in one of the Psalms: "He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we are dust." If we are living faithfully and are striving to do our best, and to do better each day, we need never dread to tell our Master all that we have done, even the worst. He wants us to be very frank and very honest with Him. Of course He knows all that we have done, but He wants us to tell Him all, keeping nothing back. We may come with the whole story, even if it be a confession of weakness, foolishness, or sin. He is never

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## Making Our Report

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severe with us, as some human friends are, for  
He wants us never to be afraid to come.

*“He knows it all at set of sun—  
The little errands I have run,  
How hard I tried and where I failed,  
Where dreadful wrong and sin prevailed;  
He knows the burden and the cross,  
The heavy trial and the loss  
That met me early on the way,  
And lingered still at close of day.*

*“He knows it all—how tired I grew  
When pressing duties, that I knew  
Were mine, I left in part undone,  
And how I grieved at set of sun,  
And could not rest till His sweet tone  
Of calming love had gently shown  
Me that He did not blame—He knew  
That I had tried my best to do.”*

It is well to bring to Christ the report of all our earthly affairs, as well as our spiritual matters. All our life, no matter how prosaic, is part of our Christian living. We are serving Christ at our commonest task-work as really as when we are at our prayers. The

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## A Heart Garden

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greater part of what we do belongs to what we call secular things ; but we are to do everything in the name of Christ, and are to seek as much to please Him in these duties as in our acts of worship. We are to put our religion into our carpentering, our farming, our mercantile pursuits, our professional work, doing everything “as unto the Lord,” and honestly, conscientiously, skilfully. In our devotional exercises we come into God’s presence to have our ideals elevated, and to get strength and wisdom for true Christian living ; then in our daily task-work, whatever it may be, we go out to live the heavenly life in the common affairs of earth.

In the single verse which contains the only record we have of our Lord’s life from His twelfth to His thirtieth year, we read that He “advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” But we know that He was not engaged all the time in studying the Scriptures, in prayer. He was a carpenter’s apprentice and a carpenter all those years, busy in His shop from morning till



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## Making Our Report

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night. We know that He pleased His Father just as well on His week-days, when working as a craftsman, as He did on the Sabbaths, when His shop was closed and He was worshipping in the synagogue. He could make report to God at the close of His week-day's toil just as cheerfully as at the end of His Sabbaths. A writer says, referring to the work of Jesus as a craftsman: "The business of the little day was so done that at the same time it was commerce with the Infinite. Every business transaction was so scrupulously pure and honest as to afford a dwelling-place for the Holy Spirit of the eternal God. While He earned His daily bread He was drawing into His hungry heart the very bread of life. He and His Father were inseparable partners in the making of a household chair, or in the making of a yoke for the ox of the field." Everything He did was done religiously, because done to please God.

It should be the same with all of us. The division of our life into secular and religious may be misleading. Our week-days should be

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## A Heart Garden

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as holy as any Sabbaths in the sense that we are to honor Christ as really then as on the Sabbaths, and do the commonest duties according to God's laws. We should do our secular work conscientiously, putting into every part of it our best skill and taste. Stradivarius, the old violinmaker, could say about his violins:

*"And for my fame—when any master holds,  
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,  
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,  
Made violins, and made them of the best.  
The masters only know whose work is good:  
They will choose mine, and while God gives  
    them skill,  
I give them instruments to play upon,  
God choosing me to help Him."*

It would be well if young men going into business would train themselves from the beginning to do all their work so well, so honestly, so conscientiously, meanwhile putting their best skill into it, that they can come to Christ's feet when any piece of it is finished and report every smallest detail to Him without

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## Making Our Report

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shame or shrinking. No truth is taught more clearly in the New Testament than that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ to give an account of our life on the earth. Then all secret things will be revealed. The Scriptures tell us that then the books will be opened. The opening of books in certain great financial investigations has brought out facts concerning business methods which tarnished hitherto honored and illustrious names. The books will be opened in the judgment and the records will be read. Nothing is hidden that will not then be revealed. Sometimes we are tempted to think that, because our work is so obscure and no human eyes are likely to see it, it is not necessary for us to do it carefully. But there is an Eye that does see even the minutest details of all that we do, and it is for this Eye that we should work. Then there will be a revealing some time, somewhere, when our fidelity or our negligence will appear. We should do everything with reference to that great opening of all life's records.

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## A Heart Garden

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There is a machine called the dynograph, recently invented, by which, as the railroad train runs over the road, every unevenness in the tracks is detected and registered. A roll of paper is moved by power received from the wheels of the car. Over this paper are suspended glass needles containing red ink, one needle for each track. If the track is perfectly smooth and level, these needles make a straight line. If there is unevenness in the track, even the slightest, the line is wavering. Thus the machine ingeniously tells the whole story of the tracks. The story of every human life is infallibly recorded in the books of judgment. We cannot pass that great day for what we are not. The truth will be revealed, whether it is good or bad.

If, then, we are to come to the final judgment with confidence and without fear, we must live all our life to please our Master. Report will then be made of all we have done through all the years, and we shall have to account for the trusts reposed in us, for our privileges and opportunities, and for every influence

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## Making Our Report

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we have exerted. We are not done with life as we live it—we must face it again, every particle of it. It may seem a little thing to do a secret evil thing some quiet day or night. Nobody knows it. It is hidden and dropped out of sight as soon as done. We do not think of it as ever coming up again to plague us; but it will. Jesus said that we must give account for every idle word we speak. If for every idle word, then far more surely for every sinful word, every false word, every cruel word, every word that tempted an innocent soul to do wrong. We must give account of all our life.

In our Lord's parable of the judgment we read of those who turned others away hungry from their doors, who refused a cup of cold water to those who were thirsty, who failed to show comfort to a sick neighbor. At the time it did not seem that these neglects were important. But the day the King came they had to be accounted for. Then it appeared that it was the King Himself who was at the door, asking for bread, or for a cup of water,

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## A Heart Garden

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or who lay sick on the hard bed. We may call nothing in life trivial. Any day may be doomsday; at least, there is never an hour of any day which may not cast its light or its shadow down the years.

There is only one way to disarm judgment of its terrors and its dread. If we live a holy life all our days, if we obey our Lord's commandments, if we do the duty of love faithfully unto the end, if we accept the will of God as the law of our life, and fill our place in the kingdom of heaven with faithful obedience, it will be a joy to tell the Master that day of the things that we have done and to hear Him say, "Well done."

Some one says that the secret of a happy old age is a well-watched past. The secret of any to-day is a well-watched yesterday. And there is no better way to keep our days beautiful and free from memories that will vex us afterward than to tell Jesus every night all that we have said and done through the day.



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